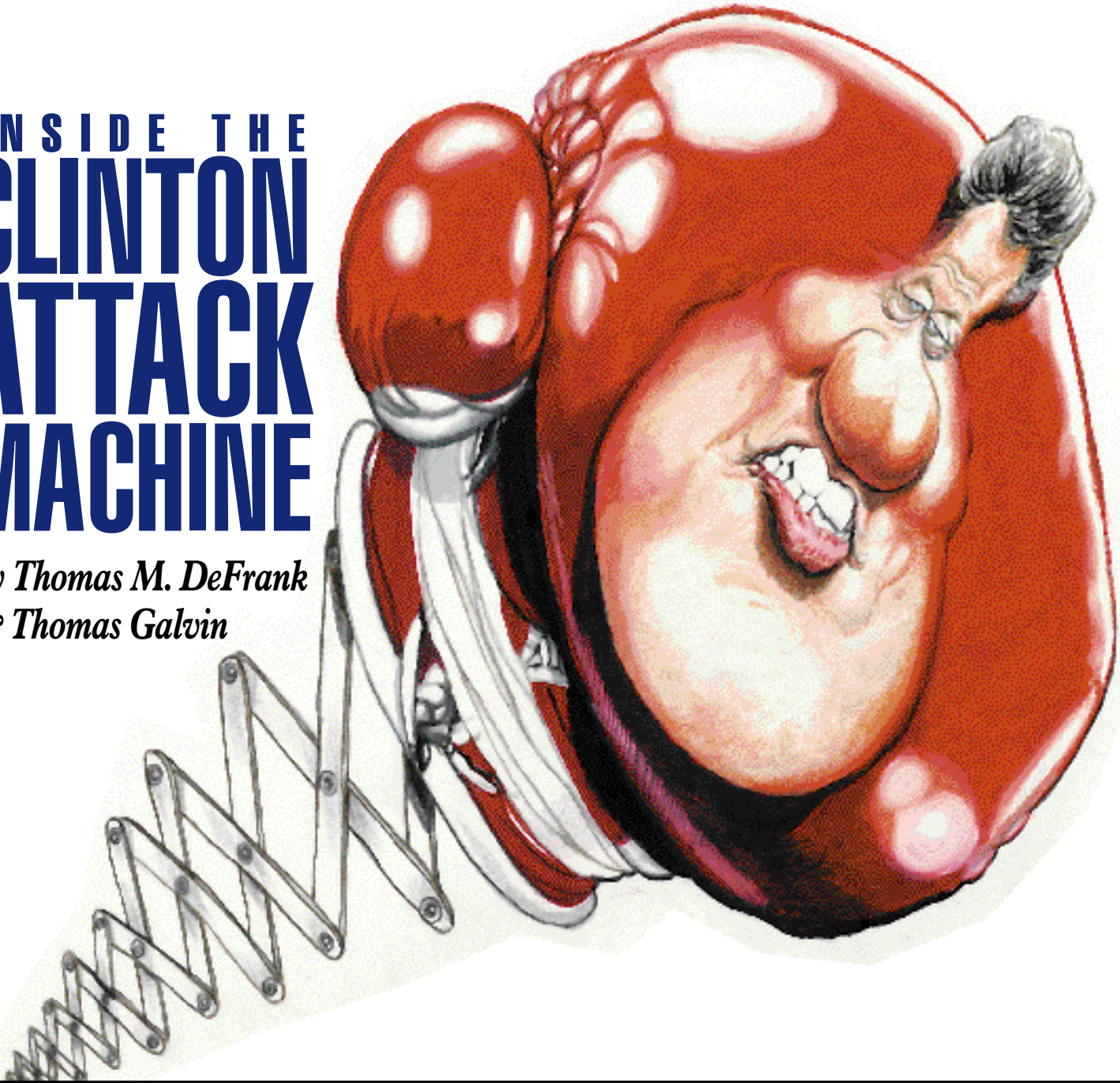
the weekly Standard

WHOLE MATH: A NEW EDUCATION DISASTER
LYNNE CHENEY

INSIDE THE CLINTON ATTACK MACHINE

by Thomas M. DeFrank & Thomas Galvin



Gingrich's Damaged GOP
FRED BARNES • MATTHEW REES • THE EDITORS

The End of the Academic Novel
J. BOTTUM

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the weekly Standard

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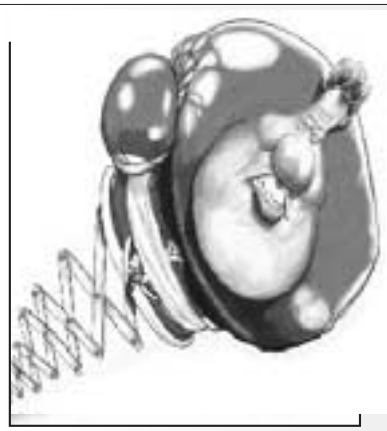

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Come the Takeover . . .

The Gate of Heavenly Peace, an American-made documentary on the 1989 student uprising in Tiananmen Square, was a hit movie in the first half of this year in Hong Kong. In March, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that the film, directed by the Beijing-born Carma Hinton, had grossed over a million Hong Kong dollars in the five weeks after its January opening at Columbia Classics, the colony's premier art house.

Chinese embassies around the world protested screenings of the film. But not in Hong Kong. Why? The weekly speculated that it might be because so many Chinese officials were going to see the film themselves, or it might be because of "the current spell of tolerance by Beijing on Hong Kong issues, apparently intended to calm local nerves before the takeover." And it might be that Beijing simply had a better plan in store.

On June 30, the day before the Chinese takeover of Hong Kong, a "complex deal" was consummated, closing the doors of Columbia Classics and (not coincidentally) ending the run of *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*. As the *Far Eastern Economic Review* now reports, the cinema's owners insist that their closing has nothing to do with *The Gates of Heavenly Peace* but is part of an effort to find a cheaper lease elsewhere.

Other sources told the magazine that the theater "was not given the option to renew its lease after it expired on June 30." The old premises are owned by a family business whose most prominent son, Vincent Lo, is an adviser to Beijing. Indeed, he's considered a favorite "to become Hong Kong's next chief executive."

Here we have the paradigm of the suppression of speech. No censorship, no violence, just capitalism in the service of the totalitarian ideas that destroy capitalism. Money buys silence.

Chairman Paxon?

Barely a week after taking the fall for the failed anti-Newt coup, Bill Paxon is being pushed by influential Republicans for a newly created position as "general chairman" of the Republican National Committee. This would be a largely ceremonial but high-profile title that Paxon would hold along with his duties in the House. Jim Nicholson, the current RNC chairman, would retain day-to-day operating responsibilities, but Paxon would be the public face of the party. This would both calm Republicans who have worried that Nicholson isn't a forceful enough presence in the media and keep Paxon in the public eye, pending future high-profile jobs on Capitol Hill. Such as speaker.

This Just In

Concerned Women for America last week joined the boycott of Walt Disney begun in early June by the Southern Baptist Convention. And they've added some reasons of their own. Among them: "Disney has changed its once family friendly films to overt anti-Christian and anti-moral themes." One example the group offered of Disney's "antagonism" toward Christianity is "*Fantasia*, which heightened the awareness of witchcraft as Mickey Mouse played the sorcerer's apprentice. In one scene Mickey conjured up the broomstick to clean the floor, clearly denying God's command to use divination."

Ah, the good old days before the 1940 release of *Fantasia*. It's been downhill ever since.

A Math Problem, 1960-1990

In fascinating and horrifying detail, Lynne Cheney elsewhere in this issue limns the efforts of Clinton administration education experts and a cabal of teacher bureaucrats to subvert mathematics—the one subject you might think even the education establishment would have a hard time ruining (see page 25). But "innovations" in the math curriculum have a long history, as we are reminded by this joke circulating, as they now say, on the Internet.

1960: A logger sells a truckload of lumber for $100. His cost of production is 4/5 of this price. What is his profit?

1970 (traditional math): A logger sells a truckload of lumber for $100. His cost of production is 4/5 of this price; in other words, $80. What is his profit?

1970 (new math): A logger exchanges a set L of lumber for a set M of money. The cardinality of set M is 100, and each element is worth $1. Make 100 dots representing the elements of the set M. The set C of costs of production

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contains 20 fewer points than set M. Represent the set C as a subset of M, and answer the following question: What is the cardinality of the set P of profits?

1980 (dumbed-down math): A logger sells a truckload of lumber for $100. His cost of production is $80, and his profit is $20. Underline the number 20.

1990 (whole math): By cutting down beautiful forest trees, a logger makes $20. What do you think of this way of making money? Topic for class participation: How did the forest birds and squirrels feel?

The Mayor Abroad

Washington, D.C., mayor Marion Barry's tour of Africa was a many-splendored thing. While the city for which he is nominally responsible continues to wallow in debt and scandalous mismanagement, the four-term former felon and his wife enjoyed an all-expenses-paid nine-day trip to the African/African-American summit in Zimbabwe (courtesy of summit organizer Rev. Leon Sullivan). Cora Masters Barry did her best to ingratiate the couple along the way. In Johannesburg, she said she felt "I'm just home. And it's good," she added, "when I turn around and look, that there are so many people who look like me and that they are running things, without someone else telling them what to do."

Of course, her words probably won't ingratiate her husband with the District's overseers on Capitol Hill, or with Andrew F. Brimmer, chairman of the D.C. financial control board, who was appointed to clean up Marion Barry's mess.

Brimmer also was along at the summit, albeit on his own dime. According to the *Washington Post*, Brimmer and Barry found plenty of occasions to spar. First Barry challenged Brimmer's endorsement of free-market reforms for Africa. Then, as the *Post*'s Vernon Loeb reported, Brimmer embarrassed the Afrophile mayor with "a lesson on Victoria Falls—a natural wonder several hundred miles west of Harare—and scolded him for not knowing African geography.

"'It literally creates rain,' Brimmer said of the falls, 'so you've got all the vegetation of a rainforest.'

"'Where does the water come from?'

"'The Zambezi River,' Brimmer replied. 'one of the biggest rivers in Africa.'"

Also at the summit was a delegation of failed pols picked by President Clinton to promote his trade measures with Africa: Jesse Jackson, former New York City mayor David Dinkins, and Jack Kemp. Kemp fulfilled his endorsement duties on CNN. "This is a really new day. It's a new day as to how the United States looks at the continent of Africa in a post-colonial, post-Cold War world. It's got to be investment, trade, and education."

Hmm. How about a continental Empowerment Zone, with Marion Barry as administrator? After all, as Rev. Sullivan pointed out after Barry finished a speech in Harare, "This is his audience, this is his constituency."

Sorry

We inadvertently failed to identify Nelson Lund, author of last week's book review "Down Kevorkian's Slope." Lund, needless to say, is a professor of law at George Mason University.

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Casual

Derek Richardson Returns

Even at a downtown intersection at 8:45 in the morning, I recognized the man the moment he rapped on my car window. He was wearing a tweed sport coat with leather patches on the elbows and a rep stripe tie. He had a bulky ring of keys in his hand, and he looked frustrated and impatient, like a late-for-work lawyer. "Can you help me?" he asked. "My car's been towed." I couldn't suppress a grin. "Love to," I said. "Get in."

I must have come off as a bit too enthusiastic, because he hesitated for a second before opening the door. But I couldn't control myself. I'd been waiting a year and a half for this moment, ever since the first time this guy approached me at a red light and asked for money. At the time, he called himself Derek Richardson. He said he had been on vacation in Washington for only a few hours when his car was carted off by the city's overzealous parking police. He needed $48 to get it back, he said, and could I help him? He promised to repay the money the second he got back to his job at the "Foreign Service School in Bonn, Germany."

It was a pretty good story. I fell for it, at least. Lots of other people must have, too, because 18 months later, the guy hadn't changed a single word. He was still Derek Richardson, still just in from Bonn. And, of course, he still needed $48. He was as personable as ever. "Where do you work?" he asked as we inched along through rush-hour traffic in search of a cash machine. I told him, and he nodded knowingly. "Doesn't Mort Kondracke work at the *Standard*?" Sure does, I said. Great guy, too.

By the time I spotted a car of uniformed Secret Service agents parked a block from my office, Derek and I were chatting like old friends. "People are so cold-hearted," he said. "You know, you're the first person . . ." He stopped in mid-sentence when he saw the squad car. "What are we doing here?" he asked as we pulled up to the curb. "Oh," I said, "there's a great cash machine in this building," pointing to the headquarters of the American Association of University Women. "We can get tons of money out of it." "Cool," he said.

Within moments I was out of the car and making a scene. "This guy stole money from me," I yelled as passersby looked on confused. The Secret Service agents scrambled over, and the four of us spent the next half an hour on the sidewalk waiting for the District police to arrive.

I found out pretty fast that the man's name was not Derek Richardson. According to the driver's license he produced, he was Jeffrey A. Cohen, a 36-year-old resident of Springfield, Virginia. Nor, it became clear the longer I looked at him, was he a late-for-work lawyer. Squinting in the sunlight, chain-smoking Marlboros and shaking, Cohen looked a lot like a junkie.

A local cop finally showed up, and I explained what had happened. The cop snorted dismissively. "There's nothing criminal here," he said. "You gave him the money. It doesn't matter whether he said he was Bill Clinton or Uncle Sam. You gave it to him. He didn't do anything fraudulent. This is not a police matter." Cohen looked at me and smiled. Then he walked away.

It wasn't the first time he'd gotten off lightly. Cohen, according to court records I found later, has been convicted of all sorts of crimes over the past 10 years, including possession of narcotics, theft, and at least three counts of forgery. He's served some time, but not much. Looking at his record, I became even more determined to get my money back. Before he left, Cohen had given the police his home phone number. I wrote it down on my hand as he spoke. One afternoon, I dialed it. His father, a retired Foreign Service officer, answered the phone. "I don't know anything about it," he said when I told him about Derek Richardson. "It comes as kind of a shock."

Actually, it was obvious the news didn't come as a shock at all, but as another sad reminder of what had become of his son. "We don't see him very often," Cohen's father said wearily. "The only thing I can do is wait till he gets in touch with me and ask him to call you back. Maybe you can get some solid answers out of him."

I didn't have high hopes. But about a week later, I got a message from Cohen on my answering machine. "Hello, Tucker," he said, sounding not at all like a drug-addicted con man, "this is Jeffrey Cohen. I don't have your address to send the money to. I'm calling from a pay phone. I'll try you back later."

He didn't. That was more than three months ago, and I'm still waiting for the call. I'm not discouraged, though. Somehow I know I'll see Jeffrey A. Cohen again. Washington, it turns out, really is a small town.

Tucker Carlson

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Punting for a New Plan

What should Congress do with our impending budget surplus? My colleague Mark Neumann has done a great service by stimulating discussion about this important issue ("A Neumann with a New Plan," July 21). Moreover, I agree with Rep. Neumann that we need to pay off our national debt. But in my view we should pay off that debt not by devoting the bulk of budget surpluses to debt payments, but rather by cutting taxes, thereby helping our economy grow while keeping up the pressure to reduce the size and scope of government.

Tax cuts will not prevent us from paying down our debt in a timely manner. In fact, if we were to continue to run a balanced budget and devote the entire surplus to tax cuts, the size of the debt would decline from almost half of GDP this year to just 30 percent of GDP in 2007. And if the economy grew just 2 percent faster than currently thought (not overly optimistic given tax cuts' proven growth effects), the debt would fall to 25 percent of GDP in 2007 —half the relative size of today.

Rather than lock in current, record-high levels of taxing and spending, in my view we should work to shrink the size of government by closing unneeded agencies and reforming entitlements. And this job is made easier by tax cuts and reforms that return any budget surplus to the American people, spur economic growth, and keep the pressure on for further reductions in our overgrown federal bureaucracy.

Sen. Spencer Abraham
Washington, DC

Culprits in Distortion

Fred Barnes says I reached the "astounding conclusion" that White House claims about who gains from Republican tax cuts are less distorted than the GOP's ("Every Man a King," July 21). I believe my assessment was fair. Barnes points out, as I did, that the administration's weird definition of "income" dramatically overstates the number of Americans who earn more than $100,000. But Barnes fails to report that boosting the number of people labeled "rich" by this standard has virtually no effect on the question of what *percent* of the GOP's tax cuts goes to what *percent* of taxpayers. In this regard, and contrary to Barnes's assertion, it is not "purely speculative" to conclude that breaks on capital gains, estate taxes, and IRAs will disproportionately benefit upper income taxpayers when fully phased-in after five years. Barnes also omits any discussion of the GOP's child tax credit, which departs from the original Contract With America proposal in denying the credit to millions of families that pay payroll taxes, but not income taxes, after counting their rebate from the earned income tax credit. My reporting found that these poor taxpaying families with full-time

workers were left out to make room for breaks that benefit upper-income Americans. The decision was made once the overall size of the tax cut became too small to accommodate both.

Matthew Miller
Pacific Palisades, CA

In quoting Sen. Paul Coverdell, Fred Barnes perhaps inadvertently identifies the culprits for the Republican fix. I think Barnes actually administered a subtle test to see if anyone was paying attention to the *real* problem.

Sen. Coverdell acknowledged that the Republicans are once again "slow in developing" a press-oriented response to President Clinton's instantaneous demagoguing of any Republican-proposed legislation. Coverdell then complained, "The president has a huge ability to move a piece of information in 24 hours. We have no comparable ability." Republicans outside the Beltway can only wonder: Do our entrenched public officials really think that we in the hinterland cannot recognize Sen. Coverdell's excuses as absolutely, unacceptably ludicrous?

Bill Clinton and the Democrats have been demonizing Republicans for six years now. Most of us in the hinterlands realized long ago that the press loves it. What we increasingly cannot accept is why Republicans are still mystified as to how to handle such tactics. It is no longer credible for Republican leaders to affect mock surprise at the manner in which their "truths" are ignored by the press, while the president, as your article put it, "has a huge ability to move information." Don't the huge resources of the RNC belie the claim that we cannot match the president's ability to move information?

There is legitimate concern that our leadership is failing deliberately to promote long-standing Republican principles. This is devastating to those of us who truly believed in the Contract With America, and who worked for the hard-won and long-sought goal of a Republican majority in Congress.

Ann C. Wollan
Wilmette, IL

A NATO Pasquinade

Judging from the title of your editorial ("NATO: The More the Merrier," July 21), I was certain it was a subtle pasquinade serving to reinforce the logic of opposing the enlargement of NATO. I discovered with much surprise that The Weekly Standard was in fact promoting, with little cogency, NATO's enlargement.

Is NATO's enlargement really in our national interest? Is there any good reason for our continued membership in an organization formed to protect Europe from Soviet aggression? The USSR no longer exists, and with the exception of religious or ethnic conflicts, there is no suggestion of a threat of aggression between European countries. Why is it presumed that Europe cannot handle any purely European

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conflict? Is it because they appear unable to reach consensus? How else to interpret their three-year vacillation in Bosnia prior to the U.S. led cease-fire?

All three countries should take note that NATO is a military alliance, not an economic assistance plan. Are they perhaps motivated by self-interest as opposed to altruism?

Considering that the European Union is a monolithic industrial and financial powerhouse that dwarfs the United States in population and GDP, there is no reason they should not expand and finance their own defense system and assume responsibility for their own future skirmishes. If, like the EU, NATO became a purely European entity, Europe would become a virtually sovereign continent with an integrated defense and economy.

I suggest that our NATO contribution would be better spent on improving our own military technology and in strengthening the capabilities of our armed forces. To be sure, our national interest consists in maintaining security throughout the world, including Europe and the Middle East. But at present we should concentrate our resources on Asia first and foremost.

PAUL S. MCCAIG
DANA POINT, CA

NATO was formed to protect Western Europe from the USSR. That need is now defunct. Yet President Clinton has invited three other nations to join NATO. Why? Who are they preparing to fight? Surely not China, the nation that helped pay to reelect Clinton. Our president wants the American people to pay billions to provide ultra-modern weapons of mass destruction to the three new kids on the block.

I believe it's a plan to equip the U.N. with the capability to tyrannize sovereign nations that fall from its favor. Will the United States someday be on their hit list?

TOM CARROLL
NEW MARKET, VA

The editors say that the monetary price of incorporating new NATO members is expected to be less than a billion dollars a year. By whose estimate? Converting the military forces of three countries to NATO standards is a large and expensive task. Later you ask whether "a few hundred million dollars is too high a price for peace in Europe." Of course it is not! Either way, neither you nor the president has yet described a vision of how this will be carried out; or why and how it will be done on the cheap; or what the nature of our future commitments will be.

The editorial makes it clear that Russia is no longer a threat in the near term. That being the case, would it not make sense to have a wide-ranging debate on the need for NATO in its present form? Shouldn't we give more thought to changing formally its mission and its structure?

The president has failed miserably to bring the American people into a discussion about the nature of our present and future commitments. His push for votes has turned into a stealth missile that has reached its first target: three more countries in NATO, with more to come. You need to give us more of your thoughts so that the country can better answer such questions, and better evaluate the merits of your position.

MYRON MCFARLAND
MONTEREY, CA

HAWKING THE GOODIES

Thank you for informing your readers about what many of us have been saying for years: High performance computers are being sold to China, and we know they have already diverted them to military use ("The Oracle of Kemp," July 21). Now we know who will be guilty of treason when—not if—American blood is shed to protect Taiwan or any Chinese neighbor China might seek to expropriate, as it did Tibet.

Those who voted for MFN status for China not only betrayed the Christians, the dissidents, and the Tibetan monks rotting and dying in prison, they have betrayed, without shame, U.S. vital interests. We shall have to pray that the conference committee will kill the amendment.

If they do not, people like Jack Kemp, Oracle corporate heads, IBM chairman Louis Gerstner, as well as those senators who voted for the amendment, should be charged with high treason when—again—the first drop of American blood is spilled by high-tech Chinese weaponry. Like Judas, they will forswear their evil deed. Yet it will be too late to return the 30 pieces of silver. The damage will have been done.

The corporate heads will, of course, surround themselves with a phalanx of lawyers equipped to protect them from the justified wrath of the American people, who are busy buying the goodies of a robust economy while their elite betters sell them out to the enemy.

PETER J. RIGA
HOUSTON, TX

ENTANGLING COINCIDENCES

In "Ernest Green's Bonus" (July 21), Byron York discusses the timing of Ernest Green's $50,000 contribution to the Democratic National Committee and the subsequent bonus—which may constitute an illegal reimbursement of a political contribution—from his employer. He also notes that Sen. Specter said the bonus was $54,000, while Green's lawyer asserted that it was $90,000. York does not disentangle the discrepancy.

Normally, someone seeking reimbursement of an after-tax expense (like a campaign contribution) with pre-tax dollars (such as a bonus) will want to have the tax impact reimbursed as well, so that he nets out even.

At Green's level of income, it is reasonable to assume that he is in the 40 percent marginal tax rate—meaning that he retains only 60 percent of his bonus. Sixty percent of $90,000 is $54,000.

Coincidence, perhaps?

RICHARD DERHAM
SEATTLE, WA

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Party of One

The gods of the Republican House of Representatives are angry, and the trembling mortals are attempting through ritual to win back heaven's favor. There has been a human sacrifice. The virgin on the altar, Bill Paxon of New York, went under the blade with a smile, as ceremony requires. "You have your head," the deposed chair of the House leadership meetings said beseechingly last week. "Enough's enough."

Just in case it's not enough, Paxon's colleagues held a three-hour encounter session in room HC-5 of the Capitol's basement—a meeting equal parts show trial, Tony Robbins management retreat, Oprah Winfrey marriage-in-crisis spectacle, and easy-virtue yuppie tent revival. Coup plotters confessed their sins and begged absolution. It was granted. "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them," quoth Newt Gingrich from the Bible at the beginning of last Wednesday's late-night parley. "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." This was Romans, Chapter 12. The speaker skipped right past those parts of the epistle where St. Paul deems "whisperers" and "backbiters" to be "worthy of death" and where, saith the Lord, "vengeance is mine; I will repay."

Then Gingrich changed costumes, from apostle to relationship therapist, and listened intently as dozens of his patients took a turn at the microphone to buck themselves up and bask in the warmth of collective emotion. *It's like when I was breaking up with Cher,* announced Sonny Bono; *things sometimes go horribly awry—but then they get better*.

In fact, House Republicans now urgently insist they are better already. All is well. Their group grope in the Capitol was "laughter and tears, anger and drama," said Rep. Jennifer Dunn. "People bared their souls and we began the dialogue." Said Rep. Jim Greenwood: "We needed the catharsis." Said Rep. Tom Coburn: "We have had a good healing." Gingrich, for his part, was once again proud of his "family"—or his "team," or whatever other metaphor he chooses to adopt for the nation's majority political party. Their love-fest, he gushed, was "fabulous" and "wonderful."

Their love-fest was embarrassing and scary.

No one can take seriously Gingrich's contention that his party's recent troubles are merely a temporary outbreak of backbench juvenilia—no more significant, as he put it, than "two people arguing over which cookies to bake." For one thing, House Republicans remain bitterly divided. As Fred Barnes explains below, Gingrich's base of support has weirdly shifted to the moderate wets and establishment committee chairmen of the House. The revolutionaries in the House class of '94 are peeved about this development, and sufficiently concerned about the political retreat it implies to have considered dumping Gingrich from his chair.

It almost happened. Because it almost happened, and because of *how* it almost happened, the elected House Republican leadership is discredited—having lost the trust of one another, of the speaker, and most important, of Republicans around the country. The current leadership may be able to limp through a budget deal and into the fall like this. But they will still be hopelessly lame, and they will stay that way until a genuinely "cathartic" upheaval takes place.

For the House Republican party is not simply divided over matters of strategy and ideology. Those can be resolved in the way parties always resolve such issues—through argument, compromise, and adept management. No, things are far worse than that. The House GOP now resembles a decadent royal court, with Newt Gingrich cast as Louis XIV at Versailles. He is a monarch at once all-important and ineffectual. And he is surrounded by courtiers scheming for personal advantage—and for the attention of the throne.

Consider the "fabulous" and "wonderful" Wednesday-night meeting itself. Gingrich did not want to convene it. His moderate "allies" in the House defied him and insisted on it—led by Rep. Ray LaHood, who was chief of staff to House minority leader Bob Michel until Gingrich forced Michel into retirement in 1994. The moderates demanded a meeting not on grounds of principle, but simply as a means to humiliate their factional enemies. And what of those enemies, the conspirators against Newt, who feared the prospect of this meeting for the purge it might have brought? One week they want to decapitate the speaker. Next week they are delighted to gather in his honor. Emerging

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from room HC-5, would-be dissident Rep. Steve Largent said the party had recaptured that special "Contract With America feeling," and he was now content. Rep. Matt Salmon, until recently among the loudest of the Gingrich scalp-hunters, said he was "very, very satisfied."

Satisfied by *what*? Nothing happened—except that the entire House Republican party gathered together to agree, volubly but insincerely, that Newt is the Sun King and that they are happy to remain orbiting about him, jealous for the shine of his glorious rays.

Newt Gingrich's past accomplishments cannot be gainsaid. Republicans might not have won a House majority without his spectacular skill at organizational activism. And there was nothing inevitable about the party's current degeneration into emptiness and self-destruction.

But in retrospect, it cannot be denied that the signs of corruption were always there. If the House GOP lurches hysterically from emergency to emergency, it is at least in part because Gingrich taught them to behave that way back in the salad days of GOPAC, with all that talk of "changing the world" through "transformational events." If the revolutionaries of 1994 are given to conspiracy, it is at least in part because Gingrich taught them that, too, urging a study of guerrilla tactics and "infiltration" and Mao. And if the insurgents cannot any longer see anything but Gingrich when they look in the mirror . . . well, that was also the spirit of '94. They were to "think like Newt." They were to "speak like Newt."

So now they *are* Newt. The House GOP is now a party of one, and that one man, for all his talents, is a deeply flawed leader. At the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, running the government, is Bill Clinton, a man lighter than air who nonetheless somehow manages to look and sound—compared with Gingrich—as though he is anchored to the ground. Newt's party, by contrast, is a balloon that floats with the wind. An old-fashioned coup can't fix this problem; newfangled psychobabble can't fix it either.

At some point—well before the election campaign of 1998—House Republicans will have to stop thinking of themselves as the children of a (dysfunctional) family, or as patients in a group-therapy session. Instead, they will have to remember how to act like elected officials: men and women who owe fealty to their constituents and to the principles they campaigned on. They are in danger of frittering away, through fecklessness and silliness, the majority that voters gave them in 1994 and again in 1996. If they are to retain that majority, they will have to clear their heads first, and then clean house.

—David Tell, for the Editors

"A Cease-Fire in Place"

by Fred Barnes

Ray LaHood has never, ever, been called a Newtoid. As chief of staff to then-House Republican leader Bob Michel for a dozen years, he often took offense at Newt Gingrich's pressure tactics, which eventually prompted Michel to retire. Running to succeed Michel in 1994, LaHood refused to sign the Contract With America, the GOP campaign document that was Gingrich's pride and joy. Then, as a moderate House member from Illinois, he was a frequent critic of Gingrich's performance as speaker. But all that was before conservatives sought to topple Gingrich this summer. Now, LaHood is one of Gingrich's staunchest supporters. Gingrich, he says, "has grown."

Jerry Lewis of California agrees. Yet for nearly two decades, he had a prickly relationship with Gingrich. Advancing ahead of Gingrich, Lewis rose to the No. 3 spot in the House GOP leadership, only to be ousted in 1992 by Dick Armey, then one of Gingrich's closest allies. Lewis loathed Gingrich's disruptive tactics. "Not my style," he says. But once Gingrich was under attack, Lewis rushed to his defense. "I don't do a lot of speaking out at the caucus," Lewis says. At a meeting of House Republicans on July 17, however, Lewis extolled Gingrich and said if he's challenged for speaker, "I'll be involved in the leadership race [on his behalf] like I've never been involved in a leadership race before."

Notice the change in Gingrich's base of support among congressional Republicans. Once he relied chiefly on conservatives, the more fervently right-wing the better. Now, his base is the party establishment: old-timers, non-ideological regulars, committee and subcommittee chairmen, leadership wannabees. "When you're an establishment type, you defend the establishment," says David McIntosh of Indiana. "At this point, the establishment is Newt Gingrich."

In other words, the people who tried to impede Gingrich's rise and criticized his tactics are now his strongest backers. The speaker has one other pocket of support: moderates. Indeed, they were ready with a

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slate to replace majority leader Dick Armey, whip Tom DeLay, and conference chairman John Boehner had Gingrich or others sought to remove them at the closed-door GOP session on July 23. The slate included David Dreier of California for majority leader, Dennis Hastert of Illinois for whip, and Jennifer Dunn of Washington for chair of the House Republican Conference. But Gingrich decided to avert another fight and stick with Armey, DeLay, and Boehner, though they had conspired to overthrow him.

The transformation of Gingrich's base leaves him stronger, but only in the short run. And he's likely to be more accommodating and less conservative. But Gingrich may soon miss the young right-wing acolytes who used to hover around him like groupies. These conservatives, mostly elected in 1990, 1992, and 1994, were his most reliable allies. Now, many are disillusioned by his frequent compromises, flip-flops, and stumbles. Gingrich has a new cadre of followers, but they aren't committed to him in the way the conservatives were. The support of the establishment figures and moderates is tepid and shallow. It's predicated more on disgust with rebellious conservatives than on attachment to Gingrich. One of the noisiest of the moderates backing Gingrich, Chris Shays of Connecticut, took weeks last winter making up his mind whether to vote for Gingrich for speaker again. Yet he huffed at Joe Scarborough of Florida, an anti-Gingrich rebel, for complaining about the speaker's effort to build a new power base.

Gingrich is stronger in the sense he has more latitude to operate as House leader. At the moment, what House Republicans fear most is another bout of turmoil. The failed coup against Gingrich proved to be a public embarrassment for practically all of them. And another attempt to topple Gingrich could threaten the GOP's chances of holding the House in 1998. "I can't say that it's been ruled out," says Scarborough. But certainly he and others are more reluctant to try again. So the result is that Gingrich has wiggle room in dealing with Democrats and President Clinton, probably through the end of the year. While conservatives insist Gingrich shouldn't yield much in negotiations on the tax and budget bills, they'll undoubtedly go along even if he does.

This doesn't mean Gingrich presides over a happy

Michael Ramirez

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Republican camp. Far from it. The situation, says Pete King of New York, is "a cease-fire in place." LaHood is still furious at anti-Gingrich conservatives. "They're people who've never served in a legislative body before," he told me. "They're ideologues. They don't really think this is a system of compromise."

Lewis argues the younger conservatives act recklessly because "they've never been in the minority before." If they'd suffered that indignity, as Republicans did for 40 years in the House, they'd operate more soberly. Still, it wasn't Gingrich or his new claque who got the biggest applause at the July 23 meeting. DeLay, while apologizing for bad judgment, drew louder cheers than Gingrich. And Bill Paxon of New York, fired by Gingrich as chairman of leadership meetings, received a standing ovation, the only one at the meeting.

How effectively Gingrich and his new allies will function together is anybody's guess. In the pre-coup days, Gingrich leaned heavily on Armey, DeLay, and Boehner, and, though they nominally kept their posts, they're not trusted advisers anymore. When they were first fingered as conspirators, Gingrich hastily put together an informal (and less conservative) team to count heads and determine how many votes he has among the 228 House Republicans. That group consisted of Dreier, Dunn, Shays, Mike Parker of Mississippi, David Hobson and Bob Ney of Ohio, Jim Nussle of Iowa, and John Linder of Georgia. To the extent Gingrich listens to them—and Gingrich sometimes doesn't listen to other House members—he's likely to give top priority to finalizing a tax and budget deal, whatever the tradeoffs. Adherence to conservative principles won't be much of a factor.

Gingrich's biggest problem, though, is himself. He wisely backed away from a bid to toss DeLay out as whip after learning conservatives would revolt. But at a leadership meeting on July 22, he suggested a broader purge aimed at driving anti-Gingrich renegades out of the party. Ground rules were needed for membership in the GOP caucus, he said, if only to stamp out disloyalty. Should renegades insist on running again as Republicans, then the National Republican Congressional Committee could fund challengers in GOP primaries in hopes of ousting them. The two dozen House GOP leaders listened to this in disbelief (only one clapped), hoping Gingrich wasn't really serious about such a divisive scheme. Gingrich didn't crack a smile.

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REBEL FOR A DAY

by Matthew Rees

WHEN HOUSE REPUBLICANS GATHERED on the evening of July 23, everyone wondered what Lindsey Graham would say. Lindsey Graham? Hardly a household name, the second-term representative from South Carolina had emerged as a ringleader in the effort to remove House speaker Newt Gingrich. He had caused a ruckus a week earlier when majority leader Dick Armey denied involvement in the attempted coup, and some members thought Graham might use the new meeting to foment more trouble.

"I thought I might give you all a present tonight and not say anything at all," he began. But he went on to deliver a stirring call for reconciliation. While acknowledging Gingrich's problems, he urged the speaker to develop an agenda around which the GOP can unite. The speech brought tears to the eyes of many in the room, and Sonny Bono, who followed Graham, had to lighten things up by talking about Cher and his appearance on *Fantasy Island*.

Graham's speech may have had more impact than any other at the three-hour meeting. That's because Graham is viewed not only as one of the most conservative members of Congress, but also as one of the most straightforward and genuine. His call for cutting Gingrich some slack signaled to many that a period of détente was in order.

Graham's retreat was unforeseen, but the real surprise was that this folksy former country lawyer had become a key actor in the Gingrich drama. He'd previously generated little buzz, and he isn't the type to spend time schmoozing with reporters. In this case, the spotlight found him.

Earlier this year, as House Republicans were marching in place, with their speaker as erratic as ever, some members began looking to Graham for guidance. These conservative Gingrich critics began started to hold meetings to vent their frustration and discuss internal reforms. When the group decided to approach House GOP leaders Tom DeLay and John Boehner with their concerns about Gingrich's performance, they chose the no-nonsense Graham as their messenger. And when DeLay sought out a rebel on the evening of July 10 to say he and other members of the

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leadership were ready to move against Gingrich, he went to Graham.

Although he has kept a low profile since coming to Congress, Graham signaled early on that he wouldn't follow Gingrich blindly. Shortly after being elected, he said he supported imposing term limits on the next speaker. He explained why to Linda Killian, the author of *The Freshmen,* a forthcoming book about House Republicans first elected in 1994: "The country could withstand anybody in this body leaving, but I'm not sure it could withstand the effects of career politics much longer. If it means sacrificing the leadership of both parties, so be it."

Graham made term limits a centerpiece of his 1994 campaign for Congress and pledged to serve no more than 12 years in the House. Thus he was angered in March 1995 when he felt the GOP leadership was insufficiently supportive of the Contract With America's term-limits bill then being debated in the House. When House Democrats introduced a mischievous measure making term limits retroactive—and so ending the career of any member who had already served 12 years—Graham voted for it.

Lindsey Graham

Graham's recent frustrations with the speaker sprang from many sources. Ideologically, he felt Gingrich wasn't pushing an aggressive agenda. And as a procedural matter, Graham believed Gingrich was failing to keep the focus on specific agenda items, causing public confusion about the GOP's message. "I'm basically tired of saying something on Monday and by Wednesday having to retract it," he told me.

That frustration led Graham to cast a vote in March that certified him as a rebel. He and 10 other Republicans voted against what was supposed to be a noncontroversial appropriations bill funding House committees. But because the bill included a funding increase, Graham opposed it, and the bill was narrowly defeated. Gingrich retaliated by making each of the 11 stand before a meeting of the entire House Republican conference and explain his position. Steve Largent spoke before Graham and delivered an impassioned statement about how he hadn't been intimidated when playing professional football and he surely wouldn't be intimidated by Newt Gingrich. Graham, who's 5'7", treated the episode with characteristic aplomb. "Let's make no mistake about this," he said. "I *can* be intimidated."

This was vintage Graham. House Republicans note that, unlike some of his conservative colleagues, Graham doesn't take himself too seriously. It's easy to see why. Though just 42, he had a wide range of life experiences before arriving in Washington. His parents died when he was 20, and he was left to raise his teenage sister. After graduating from the University of South Carolina law school in 1981, he joined the Air Force as a lawyer and spent four years prosecuting court-martial cases in Europe. He returned to South Carolina in 1988, where he worked as an attorney.

Graham didn't run for office until 1992, when he was elected a state representative. He ran for Congress two years later, emphasizing term limits and opposition to abortion, and exploiting disenchantment with the Clinton administration. "I'm one less vote for an agenda that makes you want to throw up," he said during the campaign. He snagged 60 percent of the vote and became the first Republican to represent the Baptist-heavy district since 1877.

Reelection should be simple, though it's not guaranteed after the reconciliation with Gingrich. The speaker is less popular in Graham's district than even Bill Clinton. But that doesn't concern Graham at the moment. He says he was transformed by the celebrated July 23 meeting of House Republicans:

"It was the best political event I have ever been associated with," he says. "I went from no hope to hope." That's good news for Gingrich, as is Graham's

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praise for the speaker. "He took a party that was very used to losing . . . and never let it settle in and changed it. That will be his legacy . . . and he deserves that."

By the same token, Graham hasn't forgotten why Gingrich has been such a controversial and unpopular figure. He believes if the qualities Gingrich employed to propel Republicans into the congressional majority are not "modified," more trouble is looming. Says Graham, "He's gonna have to do some self-evaluation." Now more than ever.

Matthew Rees is a staff writer for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

IN THE CIA KITCHEN

by William T. Lee

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY is marking its 50th anniversary, and it has a new director, George J. Tenet. Last week, Tenet announced his staff, a crew of veterans. The agency—much embattled, and with good reason—needs all the help it can get. It should take a particularly hard look at its intelligence estimates.

Those estimates come in a few basic models: straight, erroneous, and cooked to order. You cook an estimate by making assumptions and ignoring contrary evidence so as to reach a desired conclusion. That is why I can say, given the evidence available, that the National Intelligence Estimate for 1995 was probably cooked—though plain incompetence cannot be ruled out. That estimate concluded that no other country than the "declared powers"—Britain, France, Russia, and China—could pose a ballistic-missile threat to the United States for the next 15 years.

The Clinton administration declared a state of emergency in 1994 over the threat of nuclear proliferation, but even so it is dead set against shielding the country from ballistic missiles. The administration points to the 1972 ABM Treaty, despite its total violation by the Soviet Union for three decades—the Soviets deployed two generations of nationwide ballistic-missile defenses with some 10,000 to 12,000 missiles. When the last Congress, in December 1995, tried to mandate deployment of a minimal ABM system to protect against rogue attacks, President Clinton issued a veto. The 1995 estimate was just what the administration needed to justify its policy: No threat, no need to deploy anti-missile defenses, just hedge your bets with R&D and wait and see whether a threat emerges.

The estimate's assumptions were exceedingly fragile, according to the General Accounting Office. They were as follows: First, the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) would sharply limit the transfer of technologies. Second, no country would sell an ICBM to another. Third, those countries already possessing the means to build ICBMs would not do so. Fourth, the development of an ICBM would require five years of flight-testing.

The MTCR was created in 1987 in an attempt to curb worldwide missile proliferation. When the Soviet empire collapsed, Russia, the former republics, and other nations were invited to join the MTCR in an attempt to curb worldwide missile proliferation. It is not a proper treaty—just a collection of declarations by governments. And one of those governments, Russia's, does not exactly inspire confidence. Estimates of illegal exports from Russia since 1991 run as high as $200 billion. Up to one half of the Russian economy is controlled by "firms" created by the old KGB in the last days of the empire and staffed by them now. The new kleptocrats employ numerous bodyguards and small private armies. Many (probably most) of them are engaged in activities such as prostitution, weapons-smuggling, drug-smuggling, and money-laundering.

Legal economic activity, meanwhile, has declined drastically at the expense, not only of ordinary citizens, but also of scientists and engineers, who can market their skills to rogue nations. A number of Russian missile and nuclear experts are known to be working in India, Iran, Iraq, and Libya. The Russian Federal Security Service admits that it cannot keep track of them all. The United States almost certainly does not know how many such Russians have already emigrated or anything about their specific skills and destinations. Put together (a) what the Chinese and North Koreans are selling, (b) a few hungry Russian scientists and engineers, and (c) the money and political will of bellicose enemies, and the 1995 estimate quickly goes up in smoke.

The Soviet Union had large stocks of ballistic missiles of all types that were neither accounted for nor destroyed under the START and INF treaties. The Russians have admitted to inheriting a stockpile of 45,000 to 60,000 nuclear warheads, but the Soviet government produced enough plutonium and enriched uranium to make many more than that. As of 1993, some 30 nuclear warheads had been reported missing

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from Russian stockpiles. At least 17 pounds of outgoing uranium have been seized by Russian and East European authorities. No one can say how much is smuggled out.

How about the 1995 estimate's claim that the United States can rest easy about ballistic missiles for the next 15 years or so? Under current rules, Russia and Ukraine may export long-range ballistic missiles as "space boosters," which can deliver nuclear weapons to full ICBM ranges. A few skilled people with the money to shop the market would not require 15 years to hit a major city with such missiles.

As for the five years of flight-testing, only 27 months elapsed between the initial launch and the operational status of the first Soviet ICBM. Subsequent models generally required less than two years of flight-testing. It took the Soviets only five years to go from the SCUD missile (with a range of 150 miles) to their first ICBM, and seven years to attain their first ICBM with storable liquid fuel—and that was 40 years ago. As William R. Graham, an ex-science adviser to President Reagan, has pointed out before Congress, most of these technologies are now taught in graduate schools. SCUD and longer-range missiles are for sale on the open market. A few skilled people working for a determined, nefarious regime can make a critical difference in the time required to assimilate and extrapolate the essential technologies into longer-range systems.

Members of the House National Security Committee—including its chairman, Floyd Spence—found the intelligence estimate unconvincing and perceived it to be at odds with previous estimates. In response, the administration selected a panel, headed by former CIA director Robert Gates, to undertake a review. While stoutly denying that the estimate was cooked, the panel's report paints a picture of haste and incompetence at least as damning as the earlier GAO report.

Says the Gates report, "An Estimate with conclusions which may be unwelcome to a policy requester—or which alters previous judgements—provides unusually comprehensive analysis, clearly states the reasons for any change in previous judgements, explores alternative scenarios, and is candid about uncertainties and shortcomings in evidence." It goes on to say that an *unauthorized* Russian missile launch "is a remote possibility," but one that "would appear to be technically feasible"—a truly alarming prospect.

But in its zeal to validate the estimate, the Gates panel commits a few sins of its own. Thus, "In the days of the Soviet Union, strategic force estimates for years tended to avoid questions of doctrine and purpose, in no small part because there were no clear answers, and the issues were so violently disputed." But plenty has been known about such "doctrine and purpose" since at least 1960 and the revelations of Col. Oleg Penkovsky, plus Marshal V. Sokolovsky's 1962 book *Soviet Military Strategy*.

The CIA possesses ample evidence that the agency simply refuses to accept. For example, proof that the Soviets violated the ABM Treaty by deploying two generations of defenses has been languishing in CIA files for years. Former Soviet ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin published some of this documentation in 1995. But the Gates panel said not a word about it. Soviet secrets were almost invariably safe from the CIA—and from academics and the media—if they were placed on newsstands and in bookstores.

WAS THE CIA'S BEHAVIOR ALL THE RESULT OF HUMAN FRAILTY? OR HAS THE AGENCY OPERATED FOR DECADES WITH A HIDDEN AGENDA?

Was the CIA's behavior all the result of human frailty, or did it have something to do with the agency's own characterization of its corporate culture—"We may not always be right, but we are never wrong"? Alternatively, has the CIA operated for decades with a hidden agenda? The Gates panel further contended that "policy makers can have high confidence" that foreign development of missiles and weapons of mass destruction "will be reported promptly." In fact, the CIA has a long history of failing to report major developments promptly or, worse, of misleading policymakers on the basics, as in Iraq.

According to U.N. inspectors and Iraqi defectors, the first test of an Iraqi nuclear device was scheduled for sometime between three and 18 months after the beginning of the Gulf War in 1991. The full extent of Iraq's chemical- and biological-weapons programs may not be known even now. We never knew how many missiles Iraq had, nor were we able to find a single mobile SCUD launcher before it launched, and all that in a country not noted for its tropical-rain-forest cover.

On balance, the weight of the evidence indicates that 1995's National Intelligence Estimate was adroitly cooked to order. Assumptions were set up to lead to a desired conclusion. The CIA's own pieties concerning such estimates were violated. The job was rushed. It was an inexcusable performance by an increasingly inexcusable agency.

William T. Lee served both the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency, and now writes and lectures widely on Cold War history.

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Inside the Clinton Attack Machine

By Thomas M. DeFrank and Thomas Galvin

When he started investigating President Clinton's Whitewater dealings, Jim Leach knew he would be playing hardball. But the Iowa Republican never expected to see Jack Palladino lurking around his house.

But there Palladino was, scoping out Leach's Northwest Washington premises one evening as the congressman arrived home in 1994. Palladino, a San Francisco private detective who had been paid more than $100,000 by the Clinton campaign in 1992 to deal with what Clinton intimate Betsey Wright called "bimbo eruptions," quickly scurried away, and Leach never went public with what he saw. But the House Banking Committee chairman privately told colleagues the intended message was clear: You mess with us, we'll mess with you.

William Clinger got the same treatment. When the now-retired Pennsylvania Republican congressman was probing Commerce secretary Ron Brown's business dealings in 1995, a New Jersey detective named Louis Stephens suddenly started snooping around. Stephens had been hired by Brown's ex-business partner and mistress Nolanda Hill to button up Clinger's sources.

About the same time, a member of Clinger's staff got a call from a reporter working on a Clinger profile. She'd been tipped by a supposedly solid source that Clinger was a wife-abuser who'd once viciously pushed his spouse down a flight of stairs in a rage. There was a kernel of truth to the tale: As a young man, Clinger had gotten into an altercation with an Englishman he suspected of moving in on Clinger's fiancée. The shoving match ended with the pretender being tossed down a flight of stairs. This was about 40 years ago.

"Can I prove it was the White House behind the story? No," concedes a well-informed source. "Do I think it was them? Absolutely. They do have a pattern of getting into your past."

That's why Clinger, who chaired the House committee now run by Dan Burton until his retirement last year, wasn't surprised at revelations that White House aides were peeking through FBI files of Republicans a year later. "We do know," Clinger said at the time, "that this White House had a history of amateur detectives rooting around for dirt."

Just another day at the office for Bill Clinton's dogs of war.

The president's impressive people skills and abundant personal charm mask a streak of political cold-bloodedness and score-settling worthy of a Mario Puzo novel. That's particularly true in the way he and his lieutenants deal with anyone—critic or innocent victim alike—who poses a potential menace to the massive effort to keep the lid on the various scandals dogging Clinton, Mrs. Clinton, and his administration.

If you pose a threat to this president, you're not merely a political adversary—you're clearly a bimbo, homosexual, homophobe, alcoholic, moron, sexual harasser, crook, dupe, fellow traveler, embezzler, pathological liar, or even murderer. At least that's what every reporter, news editor, bureau chief, or network executive interested in what you have to say will be told.

"This is their standard operating procedure," says a prominent Washington attorney who's watched the Clinton team ply their black trade close up. "They go way beyond the normal give-and-take of political discourse. First they set out to dirty you up in an attempt to discredit you. Then they try to destroy you to send a signal to the next guy who might think about saying something uncomfortable for the president. And it's all a sideshow to deflect from the facts."

That's not to say the Clintonites should be playing by Marquis of Queensbury rules. Politics is a blood sport, and the Clinton crowd plays the game with considerable skill. Zapping one's political adversaries is always fair game, but there's a big difference between creating a Web site to tell the universe about Dan Burton's own alleged ethical lapses and kooky behavior,

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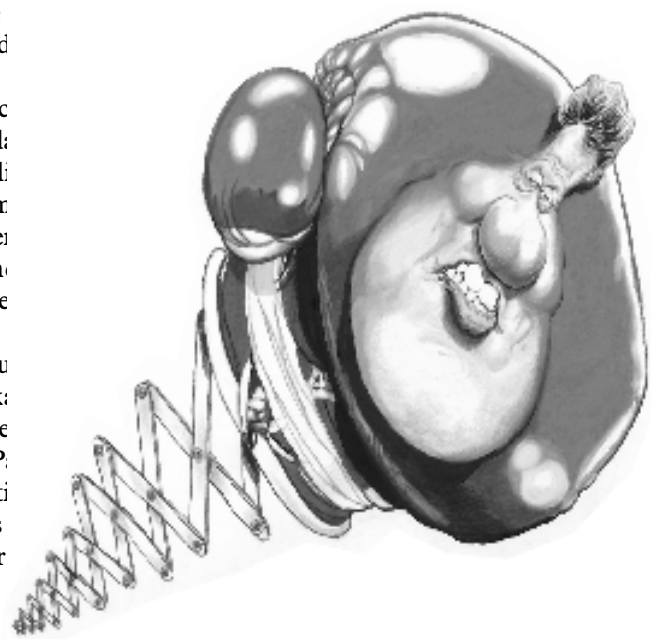
and trafficking in sub rosa character smears. Clinton's partisans move seamlessly between the legitimate and the tawdry.

While many White House aides play hard but clean, the Clinton attack machine has convincingly proven time and again that crime pays. Enemies have been intimidated, inconvenient truths suppressed, and reputations shattered—all at negligible political cost to the president. The low road has worked out so fabulously, in fact, that it's now generally accepted in Washington political circles that every future president will have at his call a taxpayer-funded team of high-octane damage-control specialists to muck out the presidential stables.

You have to admire ferocity with which it's d current and ex-White Arkie loyalists, high-pric eagles like David Kend Bennett, friendly journali cal assassins such as Jam willing to do the preside All it takes is a nod, an button men are dispatche fail to off their target.

Just ask Sally Perdu the former Miss Ark claimed in 1992 to have an affair with Clinton, P ladino went to work, getti four friends and relatives help knock down her story. Perdue never got any TV time. At the time, Clinton confidant and former chief of staff Betsey Wright bragged how she'd short-circuited "gold-diggers" who claimed to have slept with then-governor Clinton: "There were 22 of them, each one wilder and more off the wall than the last. With all that tabloid TV money out there, they were just lining up to get a slice."



Considering the number of land mines he defused, Palladino was well worth the $100,000 he was paid. (He has since gone on to bigger and better things. He was hired by the parents of the 14-year-old boy Michael Jackson was accused of molesting, and rocker Courtney Love used him to shoot down rumors she had hubby Kurt Cobain killed.) Bimbo suppression worked so well in the campaign that the Clintons quickly brought the attack mode into the White House in 1993. That's when it got ugly, and quickly backfired.

One of the first victims of the Clinton attack machine was Billy Dale, the veteran director of the White House travel office, which arranges air charters for reporters traveling with the president. The firings of Dale and his entire staff in May 1993 are still being scrutinized by independent counsel Kenneth Starr for possible criminal conduct by White House aides, but there's no longer any question that Hillary Clinton took more than a passing interest in the matter, or that Clinton intimate Harry Thomason was heavily involved in the maneuverings that led to the summary dismissals on trumped-up charges of alleged malfeasance.

When a political furor erupted over the ousters, the White House turned around and trashed career civil servant whose ecordkeeping was well known among reporters to be a little sloppy but who had a reputation for personal probity built over more than three decades of travel-office service. The attack machine, led by Thomason attorney Bob Bennett and then-Democratic party mouthpiece Ann Lewis, let it be known that Dale and his colleagues had been sacked for financial irregularities discovered by an independent audit. In fact, the audit found no such malfeasance.

Then the character assassins said that Dale and his colleagues may have been getting kickbacks in exchange for directing business to airlines and transportation companies. It was an utterly bogus allegation, later quickly demolished by the Justice Department, but not before it was widely disseminated. But never mind: The attack machine then said Dale had violated customs and state tax laws by letting reporters bring back millions of dollars of foreign goods on press planes without paying customs. That accusation may have been true, but it wasn't Dale's responsibility—the practice has flourished for decades with the nod and wink of customs officers who routinely accompany the press entourage on all presidential trips abroad.

Later, in what his backers insist was a trumped-up prosecution designed to give cover to an embattled White House, Dale was indicted for alleged embezzle-

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ment. It took a trial jury little more than an hour to clear him on all counts.

Even after that, Bob Bennett went on ABC to imply Dale was guilty anyway. His evidence: Dale, Bennett alleged, had been prepared to cop a plea and take a few months of jail time. That wasn't true either, and when the press confronted the White House with Bennett's charge, aides said Bennett was freelancing without prior approval. But Clinton loved it; the president told Bennett he'd done a great job, according to presidential staffers.

Notwithstanding the boss's private glee, one of Clinton's most trusted lieutenants admits in a burst of candor and understatement: "I think it's fair to say we were a little too heavy-handed on Dale."

Bennett and Lewis, of course, have gone on to greater glory in the pantheon of Clinton button men. Lewis is now the sycophantic White House communications director, while Bennett has dusted off his trusty hatchet and swung it in the direction of Paula Jones.

You'd think the Dale fiasco would have warned them off, but the White House attack machine plowed ahead. Next target: Arkansas troopers. When Clinton's ex-bodyguards went public with claims he used them to line up women, all his top lieutenants were dispatched to kill the story.

Senior White House official Bruce Lindsey, the president's closest aide, worked the angles, calling old Arkansas hands to stand up for the president. ABC was interviewing Federal Emergency Management Administration regional director Buddy Young—who had been the troopers' boss and disputed their assertions—when Lindsey called to instruct him to be sure to tell CNN the same story.

Palladino also got into the act. "Everywhere we went to talk to women, he was there first," says ABC investigative producer Chris Vlasto, who recently won the Edward R. Murrow award for his *Nightline* coverage of the Clintons.

Fortunately for the Clintonites, the troopers gave them plenty of ammo. Money-hungry and bitter, troopers Roger Perry, Larry Patterson, and L.D. Brown had checkered pasts and were quickly trashed as drunks, cheats, and wife-beaters. Wright went to Little Rock's Capital Hotel to spin CNN, the *New York Times*, and British tabloid pressies hanging out at the bar. "She'd go around and say, 'These guys are drunks, they beat their wives,'" says a reporter who was there.

Perry and Patterson were especially easy to whack. Clinton's henchmen quickly discovered the two lied to an insurance company about wrecking a state police car in 1992 after a night of heavy drinking. Once the story was all over the networks and newspapers, the troopers were dismissed by many as opportunists.

But that was nothing like what the attack machine did to L.D. Brown, a trooper who was once close to Clinton but became angry after he was passed up for a promotion and fought with the governor over police issues. After Brown went public with his allegations against Clinton in April 1994, Clinton partisans, including David Kendall, "told us that L.D. Brown murdered his mother and that's why you shouldn't believe him," one reporter remembers. It wasn't so. When Brown was 14, his father tried to commit suicide in front of Brown and his mother. In the struggle for the gun, Brown's mother was shot and killed. For that, he was dubbed a murderer.

INSIDE THE CLINTON ATTACK MACHINE

BECAUSE SHE WAS THE ONLY WOMAN OTHER THAN GENNIFER FLOWERS TO GO PUBLIC, PAULA JONES WAS SINGLED OUT FOR SPECIAL VENOM.

Because she was the only woman other than Gennifer Flowers to go public with allegations against Clinton, Paula Jones was singled out for special venom. James Carville set the tone. "Drag hundred-dollar bills through a trailer park, there's no telling what you'll find," he said in 1994. For the better part of three years, Jones was dismissed in the mainstream press as a goldbricking stooge for Clinton-haters. The offensive worked so well that the Clinton crowd outsmarted themselves. On the verge of a settlement in 1994 that would have made Jones go away, Clinton's courtiers couldn't resist one more slam. They told reporters Jones was dropping her suit because she knew she had no case. That torpedoed the deal; Jones got her back up and filed suit against Clinton. Three years later, he's still being embarrassed by the hubris of his attack machine.

But that didn't stop it. Bob Bennett gleefully talked about nude photos of Jones being shopped to *Penthouse* and confided to friendly reporters that he had affidavits from several men who'd allegedly been serviced by Jones in the back of a pickup.

Finally, after the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in May that Jones was entitled to her day in

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court, Bennett brought attack-machine tactics out into public view for the first time. On *Meet the Press*, he served notice that if Paula Jones really wanted to delve into his client's past, he was fully primed to explore Jones's sex life as well. This was too much even for the feminists whom Clinton has successfully courted since 1992. The firestorm led the White House to disown Bennett's remarks—even though Clinton himself had approved the broadside the night before. For good measure, the attack machine then turned on Bennett himself, making sure reporters knew that Bennett hadn't exactly lived up to his $500-an-hour fee.

As that incident proves, Clintonites are themselves very much at risk from the attack machine. Consider the case of David Watkins, a longtime Clinton pal who proved a disaster as director of White House administration and was eventually canned for using presidential helicopters to whisk him to a golf outing. Watkins had been the hatchet man who personally fired Billy Dale and his cohorts.

After he left, Watkins turned over to congressional investigators a two-year-old "soul-cleansing" memo blaming Hillary for the Travelgate firings. "There would be hell to pay if . . . we failed to take swift and decisive action in conformity with the first lady's wishes," Watkins wrote.

While gleeful Republicans arranged for Watkins to testify about the memo, a horrified White House weighed whether to expose Watkins's tender spot: allegations he sexually harassed women in the White House, including Clinton's distant cousin Catherine Cornelius, another key Travelgate player. Watkins was particularly vulnerable because the 1992 Clinton campaign actually had to spend $37,500 to settle a sexual-harassment claim against Watkins made by a campaign accountant.

Just before the White House prepared to pull the trigger and spread the sexual-harassment story, word came that Watkins would fudge his testimony and not finger the First Lady as having directly ordered the firings. Given their modus operandi, it's hard to believe Watkins wasn't apprised of what was about to happen to his reputation. He fudged—and they didn't go nuclear.

The most successful hit so far by Clinton's team was delivered on Gary Aldrich, author of *Unlimited Access*, a kiss-and-tell memoir of his days as an FBI agent posted to the Clinton White House that sent the president's men into orbit. When ABC invited Aldrich onto *This Week* last summer, Clinton aides went to red alert to try to get the interview scrubbed. Chief of staff Leon Panetta called ABC's veep for news to complain. Former congressman Tony Coelho leaned on a Brinkley producer, Capital Cities/ABC president Robert Iger got a call, and so did Michael Ovitz, then president of ABC's parent corporation, Disney. Democratic party chairman Chris Dodd and White House press secretary Mike McCurry hit the phones as well.

The message was identical: Aldrich was a Clinton-hating conservative nut case whose book wasn't worthy of network air time. ABC officials say it was the most aggressive and heavy-handed attempt to muzzle a presidential critic since the government went to court to block publication of the Pentagon papers.

The strongarming didn't keep Aldrich off camera,

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but it did shape his treatment at the hands of suddenly hostile inquisitors. True, Aldrich gave the Clinton attack dogs a huge opening by including some journalistically indefensible hearsay in his tale. As a result, the soft underbelly of the book was ripped to shreds, while the more credible passages—those having to do with the conduct of the countercultural Clintonites running free in the White House in 1993—were largely ignored. On ABC, Aldrich had to concede that his most sensational and preposterous tale—that Clinton was smuggled out of the White House for late-night trysts at the nearby J.W. Marriott Hotel—was merely a "possibility." Aldrich's credibility never recovered. CNN and *Dateline* promptly decided to disinvite him—helped along by more White House lobbying—and although the book was a bestseller for a surprising number of weeks, Aldrich's *J'accuse* had been effectively silenced. "We killed it," senior aide George Stephanopoulos later boasted of the Aldrich menace.

Stephanopoulos was speaking from experience; the attack machine had already perfected its technique for keeping Clinton critics off the air. They'd learned their lesson the hard way in December 1993, when CNN ran a story about what the Arkansas troopers knew about Clinton's extramarital flings. Even news outlets that had already decided to ignore the story latched onto CNN's report as an excuse to back into it. Forever after, one of the first calls the White House made to spike a story was to Tom Johnson, CNN's president. It worked in 1994, when Stephanopoulos persuaded Johnson that Paula Jones's allegations were old news from a trailer-park Madonna.

Remarkably, the one official who was, until recently, exempted from a full-blown jihad by the Clinton attack machine was the official who could hurt the White House most: independent counsel Kenneth Starr. Starr has largely been allowed to conduct his Whitewater investigation without a White House target on his back.

The Clintons fumed privately that Starr was getting away with murder, never having to explain why he represented tobacco interests and works as a part-time prober, or divulge who pays for his travel to speak to conservative groups. "The guy's a persecutor, not a prosecutor," Clinton has exploded to his aides. As for Hillary, "I remember the first lady saying many times, 'If we refused to answer those questions, people would be all over us,'" a Clinton strategist says. That fuming has gone public every now and then, as when the president complained to Jim Lehrer last fall that he felt Starr was out to get him ("Isn't it obvious?").

But even though they stewed, Starr was untouchable. No detectives, no efforts to direct reporters, nothing. "The feeling was it was not smart to pick a fight. The Clintons usually agreed," says an ex-aide.

But this summer, following an ill-advised decision by Starr to cooperate with a *New York Times Magazine* reporter, the attack machine has been unleashed. Clinton lawyer David Kendall sent a blistering six-page letter to Starr challenging his judicial integrity and followed up with a statement saying he's presiding over "an investigation that is out of control." Former White House lawyers Abner Mivka and Jack Quinn have suggested Starr should resign for reportedly inquiring into Clinton's personal life. Carville's invective has taken on an abusive, even belittling tone. Even current White House counsel Charles Ruff, Clinton's fifth lawyer in as many years, is described by an associate as having become "radicalized" about Starr.

What changed?

In part, Starr brought the trouble on himself. But the Clintonites have been hearing the same rumors about his investigation as everybody else, and those rumors indicate there is a strong current of opinion inside Starr's office for seeking an indictment of Hillary Clinton. So in hopes of discrediting what would be a catastrophic development, the White House has reversed field and is suddenly on a war footing against the independent counsel. "There's been a sea change at the White House," a senior Clinton hand concedes. White House aides have been instructed not to discuss the change in strategy (counsel Charles Ruff said, "I don't want to characterize our mood"), but it's clear the Clintons now view and plan to treat Starr the same way they treat all enemies. With extreme prejudice.

"Every time he missteps, there will be a tough response," says a Clinton legal strategist. "No more freebies." There's even a low-level whisper campaign underway alleging that Starr has his own personal problems down in Little Rock.

It is true that James Carville, who ran Clinton's 1992 campaign, has made a sideline in the past year out of bashing Starr. Since forming his nonprofit Education and Information Project last fall, Carville has gleefully given hundreds of interviews, dozens of speeches, and cranked up a Starr-chamber Web site (www.eip.org) bashing Starr as a partisan Clinton-hater in judicial clothing and delightedly exploiting Starr's political blunders—like announcing he was folding his tent for a dean's chair at Pepperdine University before backing off under intense pressure.

Privately, the Clintons were delighted with Carville's spirited defense. But the attack machine thought his increasingly petulant broadsides were becoming counterproductive. Indeed, Stephanopoulos called him periodically to ask him to give it a rest.

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"James didn't want to be told to lay off," says a senior White House aide. "His attitude was, 'I'm a free American male and this guy deserves to be called for what he is.'" Still, aides agree that one phone call from the president would have caused Carville to shut up. Carville didn't get that call, and now he has a free hand to crank up his Web site and go nuclear.

Recently, Carville fired off a letter to Starr about news reports that he had just unsuccessfully shopped a book. "Hey partner," Carville needled, "here's just a bit of some friendly advice, spend less time trying to cash in on your 15 minutes of fame and wrap up this farce of an investigation." Only a few weeks ago, the White House would have been forced to disavow a letter that demeaning in tone. (Even David Kendall's broadsides have been addressed to "Judge Starr.") But those days are over.

The attack machine is now poised to shift into higher gear with the ascension of Paul Begala and Sidney Blumenthal to the level of senior White House staffers. Begala's return in particular augurs poorly for Starr's prospective treatment as the indictment sweepstakes heat up. A gut fighter, Begala has a reputation for scorching the earth in pursuit of his enemies. And Kenneth Starr is now, and forever, White House Enemy No. 1. ♦

What If They Held a Hearing and Nobody Came?

By Andrew Ferguson

Tuesday, July 22

Not a busy day. This morning the Thompson committee was to meet at 9:15, to vote on granting immunity to several potential witnesses. The TV camera crews were there, lighting the room like a movie set, and the still photographers stood poised to record the dramatic vote.

At 9:15 sharp, the senators walked in and sat down.

"The chair will now entertain motions to go into executive session," Fred Thompson said.

"So moved," said John Glenn.

"With unanimous consent," said Thompson, "the committee will go into executive session."

Then they all stood up and walked out.

Three hours later, they came back. Thompson whapped his gavel.

"The committee has unanimously decided that we will vote on these immunity issues tomorrow," he said. "Anything else? Fine. Adjourned."

Then they left again.

The sensations induced by a three-hour wait for a group of senators who you begin to suspect will never, ever return are not at all unpleasant. The boredom ripens into a kind of benign catalepsy—as though you had just driven across Kansas or read an issue of the *New York Review of Books* straight through. I was ready for a nap, to tell the truth, and could have taken one then and there, stretched across several chairs in the hearing room, but a committee source told me that the room was about to be used for other purposes. Besides, Chairman Thompson was going to appear again, to make a statement in the Capitol building's Hall of Vice Presidents.

The Hall of Vice Presidents is not, as its name might imply, a dark and obscure passageway leading nowhere. It's a grand room right outside the Senate chamber, with gilded, barrel-vaulted ceilings and floors tiled in the manner of a Roman bath. Spaced along the walls are marble busts of vice presidents: drearily lifeless renderings of Alben Barkley, Spiro Agnew, Gerald Ford, Al Gore. Or maybe that was the real Al Gore. Who could tell?

In any case, the hall was as crowded and bustling as a county fair. These are busy days in the Capitol, though those of us permanently trapped in the Thompson hearings would never know it. Half a dozen senators were in the hall, each surrounded by a clump of reporters, picking up quotes on the tax bill, the spending bill, the investigation into Louisiana vot-

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er fraud, and many other momentous issues.

Sen. Thompson came out to blast the Justice Department for its refusal to cooperate more fully with his committee. I got as close as I could and strained to hear him, and was about to turn to shush a babbling voice at my back, when I saw it was Sen. Warner from Virginia. Apparently his clump of reporters had merged, amoeba-like, with Thompson's clump. "We want to narrow our differences," Warner was saying, with great earnestness, "and this points up . . ." But he was quickly drowned out by a man to my left. "The president wants it to work," Sen. Gramm was saying to his clump, "we want it to work, but if it's just a bill to spend money, well, then . . ." I didn't want to be in Gramm's clump, and as I fought my way back to Thompson's clump, I got sucked into Sen. James Jeffords's clump. "I don't know whether we're producing anything he can sign," Jeffords told me. I nodded. From nowhere more senators appeared, and suddenly I was spun around into the face of Sen. Thad Cochran, who was clumpless and looked at me imploringly, as though he would very much like me to form the nucleus of his clump. I demurred but marveled enviously at the tumultuous rhythms of democracy at full throttle. So different from the Thompson hearings.

Wednesday, July 23

This is the Democrats' big week. Thompson has allowed them three days of hearings, dedicated to illustrating their primary line of defense: Everybody Does It But Republicans Do It Worse. A committee source (as we are instructed to call him) has helpfully outlined their case. In 1994, Republican National Committee chairman Haley Barbour successfully sought a loan guarantee from a Taiwanese businessman, Ambrous Young, to the National Policy Forum, a "think tank" sponsored by the RNC. This loan guarantee, which technically came through Young's Florida subsidiary, allowed the NPF to pay off another loan it had earlier received from the RNC. This in turn freed up money for the RNC to spend on the 1994 elections, if you follow me. To the Democrats this looks like money-laundering—an illegal infusion of foreign funds into our political process. "It will all become clear," the committee source said before the hearings began. "This is extraordinarily well documented. There's a piece of paper for every step of the story of this transaction."

This morning it quickly became clear why the paper trail was so comprehensive: The transaction was lawyered to the last tittle. Lawyers drew up the loan, approved the loan, and filed the papers with the relevant legal authorities; outside counsel reviewed the deal and wrote an "opinion letter" pronouncing it legit. By contrast, the Asian contributions to the Democrats, which inspired the hearings in the first place, were slightly less (shall we say) formal. Moreover, everyone involved in the NPF loan volunteered to testify, again in contrast to the 50 Democratic witnesses who have either fled the country, taken the Fifth Amendment, or otherwise made themselves unavailable to the committee. Pointing out such contrasts makes me sound partisan, and I apologize, but they also make it difficult to see the National Policy Forum deal as deeply sinister.

Amazingly, the Democrats adopted the same inquisitorial techniques the Republicans used to bore the nation during the first disastrous week of hearings. The method is sure-fire. First, you find witnesses—in today's instance, a lawyer named Benton Becker and a former NPF president named Michael Baroody—whose voices are so low and sleepy that they barely register on the ohm-meter. Then you let them read an interminable opening statement. Next, you let committee counsel examine them so they reiterate every point in their opening statement. Then you ask them about subjects you already know they have no knowledge of. Finally—as the shampoo bottles say—you rinse and repeat: Allow each senator 10 minutes to do the same thing. Before you know it, the press tables are half-empty or worse.

Reporters take seriously their duty to "write the first rough draft of history," of course, but you can ask only so much of them. This afternoon, as the hearings ground on toward 6 o'clock, I looked up from my sports page to discover that the entire burden had momentarily fallen to me and Lance Gay of the Scripps Howard News Service. Even the AP guys were out of the room. Even Elizabeth Drew had left! As the author of exhaustively detailed tomes about campaign finance, she had heretofore been considered unboreable. Committee members be warned: If you've lost Elizabeth Drew, you've surely lost the country.

Thursday, July 24

Big news: CNN is at last broadcasting the hearings live. It took the testimony of Haley Barbour to awaken CNN from its slumbers; and with Andrew Cunanan now dead, they probably figured what the hell. Barbour began to testify after lunch, accompanied by his wife and (count 'em) six white guys in suits. They sat behind him, Mrs. Barbour in the middle, flanked on either side by three suits—a perfect statistical representation of the Republican party.

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Barbour's defense of the loan from Ambrous Young was vigorous. His trademark Mississippi accent has always been adjustable, and as he testified it thickened and thinned according to the subject matter. When he wanted to be folksy, he became almost unintelligible. "You know, Senators," he said—*Sinters*—"I was born at night, but it wasn't last night." Everyone chuckled at this, though no one had the slightest idea what it meant.

And it worked, too, for by the hearing's end, the consensus seemed to be that Barbour had emerged essentially undamaged. At the media tables, the war of press releases raged on, and in real time. When a Democratic senator pointed out that the NPF had accepted money from something called "Panda Industries," an intern appeared 15 minutes later with a Republican press release saying the DNC had accepted even more money from something called "Panda Estates." When a Republican senator said Young's loan guarantee was not technically a "contribution," another intern appeared 10 minutes later with a xeroxed federal-election regulation that said loan guarantees are too contributions. The efficiency and speed with which these press releases are produced constitute a modern marvel. Perhaps the interns should be running the hearings.

I myself was most interested in hearing Barbour defend a technical matter. When Ambrous Young made the loan guarantee to the NPF, Barbour had led him to believe that Barbour would make sure Young would be paid back should the NPF default. As it happens, the NPF was dissolved in late 1996, and Young had to eat more than $700,000 of the loan. This may not be sinister, but it's cheesy. Young has said he liked to give money to the Republican party because it "put powder on my face"—which means, presumably, that it raised his status in the minds of powerful Americans. This calls to mind the tradition, if there's a Chinese equivalent, of the heavily powdered geisha girl. Should he be surprised he got screwed?

Among the many documents put in exhibit for Barbour's testimony, I noticed particularly one letter from 1994. In its way it is as revealing of political fund-raising as any piece of paper introduced so far. Barbour thanked Young effusively for the loan, and scribbled at the bottom of the page: "You're a champ! Many, many thanks." A champ? Change the "a" to "u," and you're closer to the truth. ♦

Exam Scam

The Latest Education Disaster: Whole Math

By Lynne V. Cheney

"They lied to me," says Madalyn McDaniel of Atascadero, California. "They completely betrayed me." At a parents' night at the local high school, McDaniel was told about a great opportunity for her son: the Interactive Mathematics Program, in which he would learn everything taught in traditional math courses—only in a more effective way. But after signing him up, McDaniel realized the program was not at all what was advertised. Instead of learning rules and formulas, her son and his classmates were presented with problems and expected to invent their own ways of solving them. "He was very frustrated," McDaniel says. "I'd say, 'Look in the book, it will explain.' He'd say, 'Mom, there is no book.'"

McDaniel had encountered "whole math." Also known as fuzzy math or new-new math, whole math is an instructional scheme based on the idea that knowledge is only meaningful when we construct it for ourselves.

Trying to understand what was going on, McDaniel spent three weeks in a class using the Interactive Mathematics Program. As a member of a cooperative learning group along with three 15-year-olds, she joined in activities like cutting out pieces of graph paper, some two units by two, others three by three, all the way up to 15 by 15. The group then played a game that involved forming triangles with the edges of their graph-paper squares (known as "manipulatives" in the

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whole-math trade). The object of the game was to see when two sides of the triangle would "win" (that is, the number of units in the squares forming the two sides would be greater than the number of units in the squares forming the third side), when one side would win, and when there would be a tie. Since it turned out that ties always involved right triangles, the class, after two days, had developed a right-triangle rule: $a^2+b^2=c^2$. Having thus "discovered" the Pythagorean theorem, students were given a single homework problem—which, McDaniel reports, only two students managed to get right.

"This could have been a great exercise," McDaniel observes, "if it had reinforced a concept students had understood and practiced." But among whole-math advocates, she notes, there's a belief that "if you work with these manipulatives, you'll arrive at knowledge that you so truly understand that you don't have to practice." This view fits rather neatly, she says, with student inclinations, and with the realities of the whole-math classroom. Reinventing all of mathematics doesn't leave much time for practice, particularly since whole-math enthusiasts feel driven to link classroom math to real-world concerns and thus have students spend a good deal of time writing about subjects such as traffic congestion and oil spills. One Interactive Mathematics Program unit titled "Leave Room for Me" begins by assigning a two- to five-page essay on the world population explosion. The student might choose "pros and cons to birth control," for example.

Seeing danger ahead, McDaniel got her son out of the Interactive Mathematics Program and into traditional math courses. Others were not so farsighted. Debby Arnold, also of Atascadero, believed the teachers who told her that, although the program might seem strange, she shouldn't be alarmed. It was the college-track program, after all, and it was going to work. But when, after three years of getting As and Bs in math, her son Joey went off to college, he, like many of his classmates in the program, was diagnosed as significantly below grade level and put in a remedial program. Arnold subsequently took her daughter, an eleventh-grader also enrolled in the program, to a private tutoring center, where she was diagnosed as having second-grade math skills. "She couldn't accurately and with reasonable speed add single digits," Arnold says. After a year of expensive private tutoring, Michelle Arnold is now at the ninth-grade level, and her mother hopes that by the time she graduates, she'll have caught up. "We're upset," she says. "We're mad. Where is the common sense?"

The lack of candor that these parents encountered is not unique to whole-math instruction. Many parents have been told that whole language, a teaching approach that discounts phonics, is not being used in their schools, only to discover later that it is. But the whole-math people are taking a giant step beyond offering false reassurances at parents' night. With help from the Clinton administration, they are working to pull the wool over the entire country's eyes about the most ambitious mathematical assessment the nation has ever undertaken: the national test in mathematics to be administered annually to eighth-graders starting in 1999.

The whole-math disaster began in 1989 when the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics issued a set of standards declaring a new approach to be in order. No more "drill and kill," as whole-math people like to call traditional teaching. Instead, from kindergarten on, there would be a calculator in every hand so that young minds would be free of irksome chores like addition and multiplication and thus able to take on higher-order tasks—such as inventing their own personal methods of long division. No more teacher as "sage on the stage," instructing a class of students; a teacher would serve instead as a "guide on the side," offering non-judgmental questions and comments to groups of students working out their own mathematical meanings.

The national council's standards have influenced teaching in many states, but nowhere more than in California, and as various whole-math curricula have entered the schools—"Mathland" in Davis and Petaluma, "Quest 2000" in Brea, "College Preparatory Math" in El Segundo—parents have rallied in opposition. The most sophisticated protest was mounted out of San Diego, where a small group of parents established a Web site titled Mathematically Correct (http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/mathman/). Advocates of math reform themselves—they strongly favor teaching algebra in eighth grade, for example—the group's members came together out of concern that whole math would deprive the next generation of crucial skills. "We were worried," says Mike McKeown, a molecular biologist and one of the founders, "that our kids wouldn't be able to do the jobs we do."

Mathematically Correct is a virtual history of the advance of whole math in California and beyond. A report from Stockton tells of school administrators throwing out traditional textbooks so that teachers would be forced to use the Mathland curriculum. Parents in Illinois describe how they have been advised to let their son work with a school counselor because he "values correct and complete answers too much." There are also success stories: the school board in

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Sonoma Valley that has banned calculators in grades K-3; the school board in Hemet that is requiring individual grades rather than the group grades characteristic of many whole-math classrooms; parents in Cottage Grove, Oregon, who have gotten traditional math courses reinstated.

As Mathematically Correct demonstrates, the way math is taught has become a matter of profound controversy. But this is apparently too awkward a fact for an administration bent on national testing to be honest with the public about. At a February meeting held in Washington, D.C., Reuben Carriedo of the San Diego schools had a question for Mike Cohen, the White House point man on education. What was all this talk about widely accepted math standards? Specifically, what was this about a consensus surrounding the views of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics? "There are many battles being fought right now," Carriedo observed.

Cohen responded: "We've got a situation in math . . . where you can assert that there is pretty wide agreement on the kinds of stuff that kids ought to learn . . . and then act as though it's true and then use an assessment . . . that will help make it more true in the future than it is now." Pretend that everyone agrees with the whole-math approach, in other words, and then build a test that makes sure they do.

The February meeting at which Cohen spoke was one of a half-dozen gatherings to plan the national test that the Department of Education held between January and June. Apparently concerned about being accused of favoritism in awarding contracts to develop the tests, the department has posted transcripts of these meetings on the Internet (www.ed.gov/national-tests), where they testify to another kind of bias: favoring the controversial approach to math instruction that the math teachers' council represents.

Consider the fate of the Third International Math and Science Survey. When the president first announced his plan for national tests in his January 1997 State of the Union address, the math assessment was to be based on the international survey, which had been much in the news since it had shown U.S. eighth-graders performing below average in mathematics in comparison with other nations. The president called the survey "a test that reflects the world-class standards our children must meet for the new era." Pascal Forgione, commissioner of education statistics in the Department of Education, said it was "a benchmark for what world-class performance is in math and science."

But the survey is a test that pays attention to whether students know how to multiply fractions and do long division. As a result, Thomas Romberg, a University of Wisconsin education professor who led the development of the math-teachers'-council's standards, let Department of Education representatives know that he did not think much of the international

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assessment. To build a national test on the international survey, Romberg said at a February 19 meeting this year, is to base it "on a test that most of us four or five years ago said, Hey, this really isn't what's important." Later, he declared, "I don't want to get boxed into a framework that I am less than happy with."

At the conclusion of the February meeting, Mike Smith, acting deputy secretary of education, made sure that representatives of the math teachers' council understood how important their views were to the administration. "We want to make you as close partners as you'll take us," he said. Within a week, Smith was explaining to potential developers of the national test that the math section would not be based on the international survey after all, but on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which is, he said, "a little more appropriate for the United States."

The administration subsequently named a committee to oversee the math assessment. Its chair, John Dossey, is a past president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics; its vice-chair, Gail Burrill, is the current president of the council; and its membership is thoroughly supportive of the council's views. In their discussions, committee members have made clear that although the NAEP is better than the international survey, they still regard it as a hindrance. It "measures what's the status quo in the classroom," says Dossey, instead of measuring "where our students should be." It carries "long sets of items that are . . . curriculum dependent"—i.e., that judge what a student has learned in the classroom—"rather than [evaluating] students' mathematical thinking."

Thus while Mike Smith of the Department of Education assures the public that the math test "will be based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress," math-committee members are working to see how, within that framework, they can manipulate the exam to reflect their views. They've discussed at length, for example, targeting certain topics and subtopics so that test developers will have to give them high priority. Since one consequence of this will be to give low priority to basics like whole-number computation (described by a committee member as "the stuff that the man in the street expects that most of us think is just a waste of time"), members have even put forth a proposal to counter charges that they are opposed to basic skills: a preamble to the exam stating that basic skills aren't tested for because those skills are assumed.

While test supporters are selling national assessments as a way to let parents and teachers know how students are doing, math-committee members are intent on creating a test that will encourage teachers to adopt the ways of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The council's president, Gail Burrill, who is a math teacher, concluded early in deliberations that making the exam a more powerful lever for change was in large part a matter of molding perceptions. At the February 19, 1997, meeting, she said to Gary Phillips, who heads the national testing project in the Department of Education:

> It would be very easy to help me move beyond [the NAEP framework] because I know that my superintendent will not go to look for this document. What he will read is the document that you send that comes with the test. So if we put forth some of the expectations that are not conflicting but maybe above or different in a sense than what's in here, that would be fine because that would be sending the message that I want to send to the teachers and to the administration. But it wouldn't necessarily reflect the exact test they were going to get.

Burrill's suggestion has been translated by the Department of Education into a requirement that the developer of the math test send to teachers in advance of the exam a booklet of the extended open-ended problems that the teachers' council favors. Teachers will thereby be duped into teaching more in the whole-math mode.

Administration representatives at math-committee meetings encourage committee members to think of the test as something that will continue to evolve in their favor. In a May meeting, Gary Phillips told the math committee that the math test is "consistent with what the [National Council of Teachers of Mathematics] wants us to do. . . . If we can't get there 100 percent in 1999, we need—you need to feel and to be committed and to state that we are moving in that direction."

Phillips's words are no doubt of special solace in the matter of calculators. The public tends to think that classroom calculators hinder the development of mental math skills. In a recent survey, 86 percent opposed their early use. And so the math committee has concluded it must proceed incrementally: a section on the first exam where calculators will be useful but not necessary; then the next year a section where they are essential; and finally the nirvana where any student can use any machine on any part of the exam. Observes John Dossey, the most enthusiastic calculator advocate on the committee: "We know at this level, in a balanced program, that calculators cause no harm to what are traditional basic skills."

He should tell that to Debby Arnold, who is convinced that her eleventh-grader couldn't add because she'd never had to without a calculator. Or to Mari-

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anne Jennings, an Arizona mother and business-school professor, who reports her eighth-grader using a calculator to figure 10 percent of 470. Even during the math panel's deliberations, one committee member told about "students coming into university courses who, when confronted with numerical problems, frequently have recourse to the calculator where it's literally right on the surface."

Whole-math advocates have a penchant for making it sound as though their ideas are based on a solid body of research, but as Frank B. Allen, a former president of the math-teachers' council, points out, "Most of the major recommendations in the [council's] standards have nothing to support them other than the consensus of the authors and the conventional wisdom harbored by some of our more vocal mathematics educators." Allen is appalled at what his old organization has done. "How dare these writers," he asks about the authors of the council's standards, "propose sweeping changes including a complete restructuring of the school mathematics curriculum on such flimsy evidence?"

The reason that whole-math advocates declaim with such confidence seems to be that they work in an environment where no one questions their assumptions. Skeptics of whole math are as rare in colleges of education as opponents of postmodernism in English departments. Indeed, as in English departments, those most loyal to the prevailing mode of thought are most rewarded. John Dossey was chosen to be the author of one textbook and is credited as "conceptualizer" for another in Addison-Wesley's whole-math series. This second book, *Focus on Algebra*, has been dubbed "Rainforest Math" by Marianne Jennings, who observes that environmentalism and Third-World concerns seem to loom larger in it than equations. Thomas Romberg, the education professor who is so disapproving of the international math and science survey, is the author of *Math in Context*, a whole-math program recently published by the Encyclopedia Britannica Education Corporation. Romberg received $1,702,780 from the National Science Foundation to develop the Math in Context curriculum. The developers of the Interactive Mathematics Program, which Madalyn McDaniel and Debby Arnold encountered, have received $9,059,941 in federal funds and more on top of that from the state of California.

WHOLE-MATH ADVOCATES DECLAIM WITH CONFIDENCE BECAUSE IN THE ENVIRONMENT WHERE THEY WORK, NO ONE QUESTIONS THEM.

One can understand why the whole-math people behave as they do, but what about the Clinton administration? Perhaps it is inevitable when a president has reaped significant political benefit from aligning himself with organized education for his administration to line up with a group like the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. But Bill Clinton will not be running again, which ought to allow him and his appointees to put a certain distance between themselves and the teachers' council. Moreover, the politics of the whole-math controversy follow no party line. Although the education establishment is given to calling those who oppose its ideas stooges of the far Right, there are, in fact, liberals as well as conservatives leading the charge against whole math. The most dramatic example is the group that organized the Mathematically Correct Web site. Most of its members are liberal Democrats.

But the administration seems to have decided that it needs the enthusiastic support of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Mike Smith talks repeatedly about the great campaigns that will be waged to encourage participation in national testing. The president will talk up the tests for two years, the Department of Education will launch initiatives. The Urban League will help stir up excitement—and so will education groups like the teachers' council. "This is going to be a test," Smith declared early in the year, "unlike any other test that there has ever been."

The plan may succeed. Once the test is ready and students can take it for free, it may be difficult for governors to explain why they aren't signing up their states' eighth-graders. And Congress, which should be the first line of defense, seems to have little energy for taking the president on about anything, even something as important as whether taxpayer dollars are going to be spent, probably to the tune of $100 million, to produce and deliver an examination that will, in the opinion of many, accelerate the decline of American education.

Meanwhile, out in California, Madalyn McDaniel and Debby Arnold continue the battle against whole math. Even though the math curriculum of Atascadero High School is no longer a matter of concern to their kids, they know it's important to others. They're still going to parents' nights, and, armed with experience and information, they try to make sure that the truth is told.

Too bad they're not in Washington, D.C. ♦

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The End of the Academic Novel

By J. Bottum

Two of America's most interesting novelists have recently produced books about the academic life: Richard Russo, author of the well-received working-class story *Nobody's Fool*, and Jon Hassler, author of the utterly charming *Staggerford* trilogy about a Minnesota schoolteacher's long-distance friendship with an Irish priest. In their competent and professional hands, the academic novel proves unexceptionable: funny where it can be, dramatic where it must be, clever, smooth, well constructed—and such old, old news that even writers as capable as these two can find nothing new to say with it.

In *Straight Man*, Russo tells the story of William Henry Devereaux Jr.—chairman of English at a Pennsylvania college and son of a famous literary critic—who in the midst of various personal and professional difficulties announces on national television his desperate intention to kill a goose per day from the campus pond until his department gets its funding.

In *The Dean's List*, Hassler tells the story of Leland Edwards—the hero of the earlier *Rookery Blues*, now the 58-year-old dean of his small school in Minnesota—who tries desperately to shelter a visiting Robert Frost-like poet from his publishers, his fans, and the Internal Revenue Service.

The most significant thing about these books is something their authors could not possibly have intended: They reveal how utterly worn-out the academic novel has become in less than 50 years' time.

The notion of writing a novel entirely about university faculty never occurred to anyone before 1950. When it did appear, however, the idea seemed to dawn on everyone all at once, and the '50s and early '60s saw a spate of stories about academic life. For most of us today, Kingsley Amis's 1954 comedy *Lucky Jim* survives as a classic in a way that C.P. Snow's 1951 drama *The Masters* does not, but what impressed readers at the time of their publication was how fresh the university setting of both these British novels seemed. And in America—with the rapid publication of Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe*, Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin* and *Pale Fire*, Bernard Malamud's *A New Life*, and, best of all, Randall Jarrell's *Pictures from an Institution*—a new genre seemed to have suddenly leapt forth full-grown.

Richard Russo
Straight Man
Random House, 391 pp., $25

Jon Hassler
The Dean's List
Ballantine Books, 416 pp., $24

In the 1960s and early '70s, the genre died down a bit, with significant publication only of John Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy*, an allegory that portrays life as attendance at an American college (running from enrollment to graduation, with the constant danger of flunking out along the way), and Simon Raven's dyspeptic denunciation of rebellious British students in *Places Where They Sing*. But the academic novel roared back in the mid-'70s with four small classics: Tom Sharpe's brutal satire *Porterhouse Blue*; Malcolm Bradbury's anti-Marxist farce *The History Man*; Alison Lurie's leftist Vietnam-era fable *The War Between the Tates*; and David Lodge's light-hearted comedy about Englishmen in America and Americans in England, *Changing Places*.

In the last two decades, the flow of academic novels has turned into a torrent, written mostly by actual academics as the rise of writing programs turned most of America's writers into college professors and the mockable turns of contemporary academia persuaded most of America's college professors to try their hands at satirical novels. But the humor of the revived genre became much more bitter. With some exceptions, the academic novels of the 1980s and '90s are caustic tales of unhappy people at work in an unfulfilling and unremunerative profession. Such works as Howard Jacobson's *Coming From Behind* (a British recasting of the typically American tale of the Jewish academic), David Benedictus's *Floating Down to Camelot*, Andrew Davies's *A Very Peculiar Practice*, and Jane Smiley's surprise 1996 bestseller *Moo*, are all marvelously telling books taken by themselves. Their combined effect, however, is to deplete the satirical possibilities of scholastic political correctness and find only pointlessness in the academic life. And in the much less enjoyable books that try to satirize or illustrate postmodern critical theory by playing postmodern narrative tricks—David Caute's *The*

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Women's Hour, Christine Brooke-Rose's *Textermination*, and John L'Heureux's *The Handmaid of Desire*—we encounter a cumulative denunciation of the entire life of the mind.

The British form of the academic novel has always tended to the traditionalist complaint of a lost collegiate Eden (as in C.S. Lewis's use of Cambridge for his science-fiction fantasy *That Hideous Strength*), while the American form tends more to the radical charge of an old-fashioned institution undone by its corrupt ways (as in Amanda Cross's Harvard setting for her feminist mystery *Death in a Tenured Position*). But the most curious thing about the entire contemporary genre is that it is produced exclusively by college professors who, whether from the right or the left, attack the intellectual world with a remorselessness and irony never seen before.

To some extent, the modern academic novel simply takes tropes and stock figures from the very beginnings of Western literature and places them on the contemporary college campus. The absent-minded professor and the stuffy pedant were comic staples before the birth of Christ. There was a reason Aristophanes gave his play about Socrates and the schools of Athens the title *The Clouds*: The oldest known anecdote of a Greek philosopher tells of a serving maid laughing as Thales fell into the pit beneath his feet while contemplating the stars above his head.

And as for stuffy pedantry: Dionysius, Tyrant of Syracuse, sold Plato into slavery, so the legend goes, rather than listen to his lectures anymore. One reason for young Alexander's leaving Macedonia to conquer the world may have been to escape his tutor Aristotle's endless ramblings about virtue, biology, and the metaphysical interconnectedness of formal and final causes.

Later, the absent-minded professor crossbred with the Faust legend to spawn the mad scientist who in his obsession never bothers to consider the consequences of his work. The stuffy pedant ripened into the petty intellectual, with his perpetual hypocrisy of high ideas and low behavior. And at least since Plato's students trooped off to Syracuse to overthrow Dionysius' son, armed apparently only with a knowledge of advanced geometry and their teacher's Theory of the Forms, there has existed the trope of the well-educated student ill prepared by his professors for real life.

The medieval and Renaissance university had its share of satirical critics, some of whom—like Erasmus in his *Praise of Folly*—were academic insiders. But except in learning and firsthand experience, their lampoons are not much distinguishable from, for example, the non-academic Shakespeare's lighthearted mockery of bookish intellectuals in *Love's Labours Lost*.

According to the scholar Alan Nelson, there was a tradition of internal farces at the British universities from 1510 to 1639, comprising such now deservedly unremembered plays as Thomas Mudde's *Comedy Satirizing the Mayor of Cambridge*, Thomas Randolphe's *The Drinking Academy*, and the anonymous *Return from Parnassus* and *A Christmas Messe*. But they were apparently performed as part of initiation ceremonies, typically written by, for, and mostly about the students rather than their professors. By the 18th century, with such works as Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Tobias Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle*, the university had become in fiction little more than a conventional satirical stop on the standard picaresque tour.

Even with the 19th-century flowering of the novel, the purpose of the campus and its professors remained primarily the old-fashioned one of providing a background for stories about students. In such dusty Victorian triple-deckers as Joseph Hewlett's *Peter Priggins, The College Scout*, John Gibson Lockhart's *Reginald Dalton: A Story of English University Life*, and Cuthbert Bede's *Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green, An Oxford Freshman*, the 18th-century picaresque novel evolved naturally into the tale of a four-year stopover in the growth of a young man.

In part, the appearance of this kind of "undergraduate novel" may reflect the rise in importance of university education, rather than earlier schooling, to Victorian men's careers. Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown at Oxford*, the now little-read sequel to *Tom Brown's School Days*, smoothly follows its hero off the playing fields of Thomas Arnold's Rugby and on to the Varsity. In America, by a similar though later progression, Owen Johnson's fine stories about boarding-school life at the Lawrenceville Academy in *The Prodigious Hickey* and *The Tennessee Shad* led easily to his college tale, *Stover at Yale*. The raft of rowdy undergraduate stories beginning in the 1870s produced, by the first years of the 20th century, such unjustly neglected American comedies as Charles Flandreau's *Harvard Episodes* and Owen Wister's *Philosophy Four*—and one classic, Max Beerbohm's 1911 *Zuleika Dobson*, with its account of an entire Oxbridge class of English undergraduates parading down to the river to drown themselves in despair over the inaccessible beauty of the novel's heroine.

The importance of British university faculty found some recognition in the Anglican "Oxford Movement" novels from J.A. Froude's *The Nemesis of Faith* to Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Robert Elsmere* (perhaps the best-selling novel of the Victorian age). But the closest 19th-century equivalent to the modern academic tale may be less the open campuses of the undergraduate novel than the confined cathedral closes of bishops, deans, and archdeacons in Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*, and the claustrophobic world of London's

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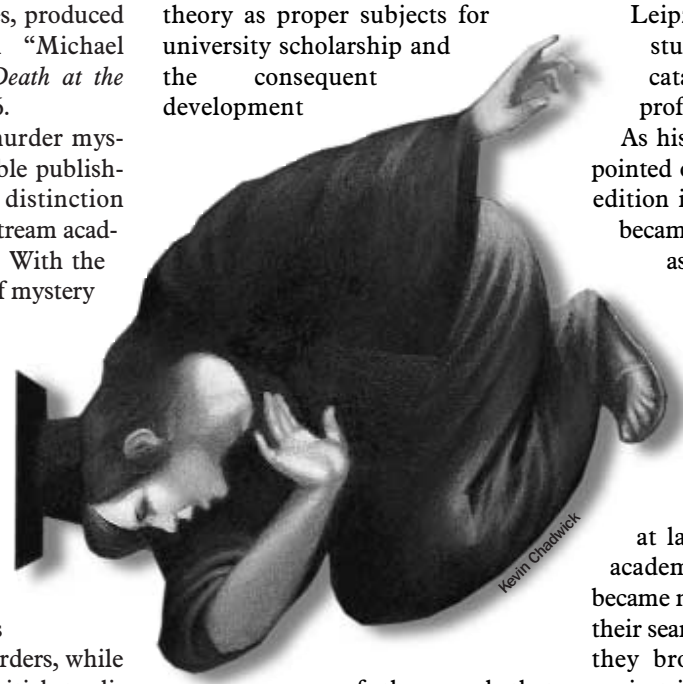
intellectual journalists in George Gissing's *New Grub Street*—each the site of actual grown-ups fighting in very tight spaces for very small rewards.

For the most part, mystery writers were the first—even before Amis, Snow, and the rest of the 1950s authors—to notice the uses to which the narrow college settings and well-defined faculty formalities could be put: Dorothy Sayers published her one college mystery, *Gaudy Night*, in 1936; and J.I.M. Stewart, author of over 20 campus mysteries, produced under the pseudonym "Michael Innes" his archetypal *Death at the President's Lodging* in 1936.

Though the faculty murder mystery remains a recognizable publishing category, little real distinction between it and the mainstream academic novel now remains. With the increased respectability of mystery writing, and especially with the increased brutality of the academic novel after its revival in the mid-1970s, the various subgenres have all blurred together, and even such comic British redbrick-university tales as Tom Sharpe's *Wilt* can now include murders, while such mysteries as the British traditionalist Jocelyn Davey's *Murder in Paradise* and the American feminist Susan Kenney's *Graves in Academe* contain what is at least intended as serious social criticism.

It's difficult to say quite why the modern academic novel—essentially, the story of squabbling college teachers—emerged so suddenly from this stew of schoolboy stories, undergraduate novels, murder mysteries, ancient legends of pedants and bookworms, chronicles of cathedral closes, and tales of journalistic struggles. It may derive from little more than the growing presence of faculty women and the aging in fiction of legitimate sexual desire that no longer requires love stories to be about 19-year-olds.

Or it may originate simply in the 20th-century rise of a middle-class professoriate to perform that most middle-class of activities, the writing of novels. Certainly it owes a great deal to the growth of the universities after World War II and the increase in both faculty and graduates as interested audiences. It may even have something to do with the acceptance of fiction and critical theory as proper subjects for university scholarship and the consequent development of the novel that refers back to the study of other novels. (Though it's hard now to remember, there was a time when fiction was thought by serious scholars to be as inappropriate a subject for a college curriculum as, say, movies and television programs were until recently.)



Perhaps the most important cause of the academic novel, however, is the appearance of writers in professional writing programs. It was for a reason that McCarthy, Nabokov, and Jarrell began to write their scholastic stories at the same time that they began making semester-long star appearances on college campuses. In the case of Richard Russo's *Straight Man* and Jon Hassler's *The Dean's List*, the result is entirely destructive: a pair of engaging novelists-turned-writing-professors who have used up their old stock of experiences and observations and now have nothing left to write about but their own collegiate lives.

The ancient gibes at intellectuals have at least this much truth in them: It is dangerous to leave anything entirely in the hands of academics. In 1713, J.B. Mencken wrote *The Charlatanry of the Learned*, a pair of commencement addresses at Leipzig that let the graduating students in on faculty humor, cataloging the funny stories professors tell about themselves. As his descendant H.L. Mencken pointed out when he prepared a new edition in the 1930s, the little book became an instance of its own joke as generation after generation of scholars overwhelmed the text with scholia, squeezing into footnotes all their own favorite anecdotes and quips.

But the hundreds of college professors busily writing since the 1950s have at last played out that mine of academic waggery. And as they became more and more outrageous in their search for something new to say, they brought the entire academic project into disrepute—scholarship denounced by scholars as trivial, the life of the mind rejected by intellectuals as meaningless, the university faculty proclaimed by the faculty themselves to be hateful.

And so we have come to the end of the academic novel in English. All its plots have grown stale, all its jokes have gone flat, and all its possible narrative devices have been exhausted in the 400 academic burlesques, melodramas, and murder mysteries published in the last five years—in the nearly 2,000 published since 1950. The time has come to shut it down. ♦

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Classical Singers Go Pop

Genuflecting at the Sign of the Crossover

By Jay Nordlinger

For the past few years, the mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne has been offering her audiences an unusual encore: "Bridge Over Troubled Water," the 1970 Simon & Garfunkel hit. The effect is both unsettling and transfixing. The voice is familiar; so is the song. But the voice and the song together are an entirely new concept. Horne may be slumming, but she is slumming elegantly. All of her hallmarks are in place: the sound, the intonation, the breathing, the phrasing. It is as though we have never heard the piece before. She is not stooping down to it, but lifting it up. The tempo is more brisk than in the well-known recording. The accompaniment is sensible and restrained. The line is securely held. By the time she has finished, Horne has transformed the song into something beguiling and hard to forget.

Of course, classical musicians have been performing popular music—"crossing over"—since the beginning of time. The Australian diva Nellie Melba—she for whom the toast and peach dish were named—used to sidle up to the piano after a taxing recital and sing "Home, Sweet Home." In 1918, when American boys were fighting and dying on foreign soil, Enrico Caruso recorded "Over There." Ezio Pinza answered the call of Broadway to star in *South Pacific*, and so did Robert Merrill in *Fiddler on the Roof*. Once, Leontyne Price brought the house down in the party scene of *Die Fledermaus* with Stephen Sondheim's "Send in the Clowns." Why do they do it? For many reasons: fun, variety, shock value, money. But mainly, they do it because they do it well. Little in music is more satisfying than a crossover that scores.

Never before have we had so many crossover albums on the market; the record stores are bulging with them. Every singer—particularly the Americans—seems to think it is his right to have a go at Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, and Harold Arlen. We now have practically as many Arlen collections as Puccini ones. It seems that every major musical has been recorded by operatic forces in the last 10 years; sometimes, as with *Carousel*, we have two or three choices. These albums sell extraordinarily well, attractive to buyers of many stripes. (The same is true of Christmas albums—another type of crossover recording—which are innumerable and have always been commercially fail-safe.) The King's Singers can handle a madrigal as well as any group, but they win their largest fame and fortune with the Beach Boys' "Good Vibrations" and Randy Newman's "Short People." They deserve every penny, too: The identical skills that make them effective in classical music, they apply to the pop favorites.

The current crossover sensation is a recording of Rodgers & Hammerstein by Bryn Terfel, the Welsh farm boy who, at 31, may be the most acclaimed bass-baritone in the world. He is an exceptionally versatile musician, adept in Mozart operas, German song, and the 20th-century British repertory, of which he is a faithful champion. It was perhaps inevitable that he would venture into crossover territory, and inevitable, too, that he would pick Rodgers—so kind to the voice, so reliably tuneful, adopted by concert musicians as an honorary classical composer. Rarely has Rodgers had it so good.

The songs emerge from Terfel newborn—variegated, burnished, fully exploited. He can do them justice as few pop singers can. Why? Because he is equipped with all the tools, and music, fundamentally, is music. Terfel produces a creamy, opulent, flexible sound. He also sings in tune, which is no small benefit. He has a real *piano*, one that does not go hush. He can effect a *diminuendo*—an important, difficult trick. He has a seamless *legato*, necessary to the beauty of any lyrical piece. He has many happy layers of modulation. When he sings, "All the sounds of the earth are like music," they are. He can sing the low notes without fading out. He can go up high without an increase of volume (often musically inappropriate). He has ample breath control, which enables him to bridge over phrases that ought to remain together. His every asset, he lends to these songs, which profit from them as much as the most complicated aria. If the late Richard Rodgers could have heard the pure, *pianissimo E* that Terfel floats at the end of "Some Enchanted Evening," it would have sent shivers down his spine.

Terfel's account of "Surrey with the Fringe on Top" begins with a rollicking recitative, which we are aware of, really, for the first time. We hear notes—right on the mark—that have always escaped our attention, because they have been imprecisely sung. The music lives as it is meant to, freed from the limitations of its traditional performers. Songs that can come off silly ("June Is Bustin' Out All Over") are instead irresistible.Terfel can generate startling power—with no hint of shout—which makes "What a Lovely Day for a Wedding" a dynamo. "Something Wonderful" (the title song of the album) is too big, too imposing; Terfel misconceives the piece, depriving it of its tenderness. But his "Soliloquy" from *Carousel* is masterly, reminiscent of the bass-baritone monologues in

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opera; he sings rather than talks his way through it, showing off the composer's remarkable intervals. We find ourselves impressed, not merely with Terfel, but, once again, with Rodgers, whom the singer affords a new—and fitting—standard.

Terfel's chief rivals in the crossover department, male division, are the baritone Thomas Hampson and the bass Samuel Ramey. Hampson is long on looks and personableness—"Thomas Handsome," they call him—but he is an interesting singer, too, and he takes his pop sideline seriously. His Cole Porter album, *Night and Day*, is solid and appealing. It is marred, however, by orchestral accompaniments (many of them the originals) that make songs that are not inherently shlocky seem so. The jewel in the collection is "In the Still of the Night," a gleaming, wondrous composition. Horne uses it too, and it thrives on the classical touch.

Ramey loves to cross over, but he does it less smoothly than some of his peers. His singing is a bit too stentorian, too rigid, for pop music. But his album *So In Love* is not without riches, among them "The Impossible Dream"—which concludes with a major-league high *F*—and Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Music of the Night." Ramey treats this latter piece with refreshing straightforwardness and simplicity—no stagy swoons or gulps. He infuses it with a velvet dignity that makes it Puccini-like, as, indeed, Lloyd Webber has borrowed a note or two from that composer (which is perfectly kosher). And it is a privilege to hear "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face" actually sung. Even so, we miss Rex Harrison's patter, and it is odd to hear the words stretched out on the vowels, classical style: "Her charms are second nature to me nahhhhow, [no inhalation] like breathing out and breathing ihhhhn." There are certain tunes that should perhaps be left on the other side of the line.

Possibly the greatest joy about crossover is its sheer incongruity, the delighted shock at seeing a fish ride a bicycle. There can be no stranger recording—anywhere, of anything—than that of Birgitt Nilsson singing "I Could Have Danced All Night," accompanied by Herbert von Karajan and the Vienna Philharmonic. The ear can hardly believe it when she begins, "Bed! Bed! I couldn't get to bed!" The timbre is unmistakable, but it is supposed to be elsewhere. We barely understand a word, of course, because the Swedish Wagnerian was never known for her English. But her sense of the piece is marvelous, as she toys with the notes, reveling in what she is doing. Nilsson is the first—and no doubt the last—Brünnhilde Doolittle. Karajan seems swept up in the act too, as he and the orchestra—mighty vessel of Bruckner and Mahler—dance along with the soprano. On the penultimate note, she goes up to a *G*, and you're thinking, "Oh, no, she just can't," but, yes, she does: On the final "night!" she nails a glorious, heavens-filling high *C*, straight out of Bayreuth. It is ever so slightly inapposite, musically, but, you know? If you got it, flaunt it. The moment is electrifying, absurd, unique. It's like the old joke about the dog: She does it because she can.

That recording can be found on a disc called *The Opera Lover's Broadway*, which features several other such guilty pleasures. Cesare Siepi, the refulgent Italian baritone, sings Porter's "So In Love," just slinging voice at it. There is, in the end, no substitute for a golden throat. (Verdi is reputed to have said that the first three requirements of singing are, "Voice, voice, and voice.") Initially, we are astonished to hear the familiar tone of Siepi projecting English words. Then, it dawns on us that he is doing a Broadway number, to boot, with soupy harps all about. Porter—far from being kidnapped—is living in luxury. Siepi also sings "Wunderbar," which arrives at a sort of ultimate: an Italian baritone performing a Broadway show tune replete with German words. Only in America.

The fabled bass George London sings "Ol' Man River," a veritable national anthem for basses, especially English-speaking ones. London gives it an air of holiness, with the same reverent sound that made him unparalleled in Brahms's *German Requiem*. Joan Sutherland sings "Make Believe," and it is much as you would expect: a gossamer *bel canto* aria. Interestingly enough, singers doing crossover tend to sound just about as we would imagine. Close your eyes, and you can hear anyone doing anything. Try it: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau singing "Love Me Tender"; Maria Callas singing "Tangerine." It works. There is a recording of Kathleen Ferrier—the esteemed, solemn British contralto—accompanying herself at the piano during a post-concert party, drunk. She goes through a series of ridiculous ditties like "Will o' the Wisp" and "The Antelope." And amazingly, she sounds just like herself, the very same singer from Mahler's *Lied von der Erde*.

Not invariably are crossovers successful, as witness a recent disc of Arlen songs from Sylvia McNair, an American soprano, and André Previn, who has been making jazz albums with classical singers for 40 years. McNair has taken a regrettable approach: She wants to sing, not as the worthy classical singer she is, but as a pop singer would, or as she supposes a pop singer would. She has altered her technique entirely. All through, she sings in a pathetic, anemic half-voice, as Previn picks at the piano in that annoying cocktail manner he so favors. She leaves everything that is commendable about her—everything that sets her apart from the pop crowd—at home. If she is going to do that, she might as well give over the studio time to Cleo Laine, a more capable jazz artist. When she says, at the beginning of "Paper Moon," "Uh-one, uh-two, uh-you know what to do," it is painful. (The song includes the lyric "as phony as it can be.") McNair has little

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feel for this idiom, is an impostor in it. The project is a disaster.

One singer who crossed over all the way—without a backward glance—is Eileen Farrell, now in her 70s. She was a dramatic soprano and oratorio singer of great distinction. In 1960, she caused a stir with an album defiantly titled *I Got a Right To Sing the Blues*. Gradually, she let her classical technique die out and embraced the methods of the jazz lounge. In her compilation *My Very Best*, she breathes like a pop singer—which is to say, shallowly and often—and she slides, tastefully, among the notes. There are few remaining traces of her former soprano—Farrell uses the lower register, as sopranos, even in their prime, tend to do when crossing over—but now and then she is recognizable as the old Farrell. She still has her musical sense, of course, and her pitch is proudly accurate. There are certainly worse ways to pass retirement; her "Stormy Weather" is far above average.

But there is something slightly wistful and sad about Farrell's second career, for some of us. Fewer people now remember what she was—though Sony Classical has just reissued a stellar disc of Verdi arias—and many know her, if they know her at all, only as a corpulent, white-haired old lady with a mike. It may be said of her, though, that she never tried to straddle, that, when she went, she went whole hog. According to Marilyn Horne, who is now in her mid-60s, a singer cannot long serve two masters. "I have dabbled in pop music all my life," she has said, "but you cannot go in and out of these styles. You have to stick to your technique or it will go down the drain. I feel now at my age that I can do it a bit more."

Occasionally, a pop singer will cross over the other way, and the results are seldom good: Barbra Streisand once made a recording of arias and art songs. Luciano Pavarotti and Michael Bolton recently put in a wretched appearance together on the David Letterman show, bleating "Nessun dorma" from Puccini's *Turandot* in alternating phrases. As a rule, it is unwise to place a classical voice next to a pop voice; the inequality is too jarring.

The classical musician who crosses over is usually a singer, but not always: Vladimir Horowitz loved to imitate Art Tatum improvisations, though, unfortunately, he never shared them with the public. But Jascha Heifetz made some astounding recordings of popular music in the 1940s, now available on MCA Classics. Heifetz is commonly thought of as a stern, unsmiling man, but he enjoyed music from American culture, and he transcribed and performed it with relish. In "A Woman Is a Sometime Thing," the violinist could hardly be bluesier. And he is particularly affecting in his arrangement of the spiritual "Deep River," which is full of wailing double-stops and plaintive octaves. The climax is unbelievably arresting, and the entire performance is as convincing as the most inspired sung ones (of which there are many). Heifetz also plays "White Christmas," and, speaking of Bing Crosby, the two of them do a couple of cuts together, the weirdest of which is an adaptation of the tenor aria from Godard's opera *Jocelyn*. Bing is honeyed as always, but musically moronic, so that the effort—though a fine curiosity—is comical. Heifetz is dazzling in "Mackie Messer," the Weill song that came to be known as "Mack the Knife," giving it—among other flourishes—a fiendish pizzicato variation.

A FAMED ITALIAN BARITONE SINGS COLE PORTER WITH GERMAN WORDS—ONLY IN AMERICA.

Of today's singers, who crosses over most successfully (along with young Terfel)? The Queen of Crossover is undoubtedly Kiri Te Kanawa, who will record anything she can get her hands on, from the usual show tunes to soft-rock numbers. By and large, she adapts well, putting the brakes on the voice, finding the appropriate style, while never forgetting that she is a diva and therefore brings certain cards to the table. Her rendition of the Rodgers & Hart song "I Didn't Know What Time It Was," with Nelson Riddle and his orchestra, represents the best of her crossover art. It is intimate, rhythmically disciplined, infectious—a model of the genre. When she goes up an octave on the word "eyes," she neither leaps nor lunges, but caresses the note, as the musical line demands. That she can do this thanks to a well-manipulated hard palate, no listener really cares, but the point remains that technique and musicianship cannot be separated as easily as we might like—the one gives flight to the other. Te Kanawa can do more with a song for the same reason that Wolfgang Puck can do more with a pizza: She has better ingredients and superior training.

The mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade, too, is a crossover hound. In fact, she may be preferable there, as certain of her mannerisms that blemish classical music are more welcome in pop. Von Stade tends to flat, to slide, to get cutesy—none of which is an obstacle in her own Rodgers & Hart collection. And no matter what she performs, she has the habit of singing sexy, which can be bothersome in Schubert but is ingratiating in "My Funny Valentine."

Lately, she has teamed up with Dave Brubeck's son Chris to record his father's songs. Some of the music is too insipid to be redeemed even by von Stade, but at least she makes tolerable what the classical-oriented listener otherwise could not stomach. The Brubecks are lucky to have her. Again, though, the mixture is untenable when Chris joins her in song, because you can tell that the one is

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probably looking obligingly at the other, coaxing him along, the way an adult does with a child, or Beverley Sills used to do with Carol Burnett on television. If you like Brubeck, you have no need of von Stade to interpret him; if you are not inclined to Brubeck, von Stade cannot save him for you. Yet classical musicians often can do such saving, one of the strengths of crossover: Many of us are unable to listen to Billy Joel sing his "And So It Goes," but, done by the King's Singers (it is one of their signature pieces, a regular encore), it is lovely, endearing.

What, then, are the gifts of classical musicians—singers in particular—to popular music? First, they have their musicianship, a refinement that elevates whatever it joins with. Then, they have voice. They have intonation—a song, high or low, should be sung in tune. They make it possible for us to hear hackneyed music, music that, in other circumstances, we are weary or unappreciative of. They enable us to discover things in songs that have been allowed to be mossed over. They make for the composers the best cases possible. They breathe better, phrase better, keep time better than pop singers. In short, they have more arrows in their quiver, more tricks in their bag, more colors on their palette. To borrow from Irving Berlin, whatever pop stars can do, classical ones can—not unfailingly, but often, very often—do better. ♦

A Visit to Sinatrapalooza

A Ring-a-Ding-Ding Time in Atlantic City

By Matt Labash

Thirty years ago, Gay Talese wrote a famous essay called "Frank Sinatra Has a Cold." These days, Frank Sinatra has much more than a cold. There's the two recent heart attacks, the Alzheimer's rumors, and now, the tabloids are certain he has bladder cancer. His family says he's fine. But whoever the guy is who keeps getting photographed in wrinkled pajama tops with Abe Lincoln growth and his rug sagging left doesn't look like a serenely aging version of the snap-brimmed, elegantly haberdashed Sinatra of the Capitol years, or even the last-legs penguin-suit-and-party-heels Sinatra of the mid-'90s. Frank isn't talking—he always regarded the press as a bunch of "buck-and-a-half whores." But the smart money says that at 81, he's about two hands shy of the big casino.

So there is a tinge of finality and high purpose when my Frankophile editor dispatches me to the second annual "Sinatrapalooza" convention in Atlantic City. Not only do I go to retrieve some of the best esoterica the nation's Sinatra collectors can offer before Frank expires and jacks the prices to hell—the real mission is to separate the chaff from the wheat, the true Sinatra crazies from the nouveaux swingers and cigar-and-martini chicks who ape Frank's Rat Pack Era fabulosity with all of his tics and none of his soul.

The good news is, the irony buses don't run 20 miles outside Atlantic City to the low-roller Sheraton hotel (decorated in the conch-shell pastels of a Sarasota retirement center) that is home to Sinatrapalooza. These 100 or so devotees love him more than his fourth wife, Barbara, does, and last weekend's assemblage was a three-day vigil of karaoke and elegiac commerce, with no hope of Frank's making a cameo. "He's in bad shape," says conference organizer and alpha-fan Rick Apt (manager of the Sinatra Web site, www.blue-eyes.com). "He ain't goin' anywhere."

Though many already speak of him in the past tense, they all call him "Frank" as if they know him. And in a way they do. They know his birth address in Hoboken, and that his favorite color is orange, and that his smokes were Lucky's, and that his drink was Jack Daniels, and that "Summer Wind" is the most perfect hybrid of swinging melancholia ever vinylized, and that "In the Wee Small Hours Of the Morning" is the best friend you'll ever have if your wife leaves you.

And it is easy to go drippy, as do so many slumming intellectuals and shotglass sentimentalists from the Pete Hamill school of ooze. Keeping in mind that Sinatra was, or is, a marginally irreverent guy: driving golf carts through windows, throwing a glass pitcher at Buddy Rich's head, ripping phones out of the wall at the Sands for being the wrong color, ripping pages out of scripts when shooting interfered with "'tini time," hanging out with monikers like "the Crusher" and "the Weasel," and eating ham and eggs off a hooker's chest with the good silver.

The true fans embrace all facets of Sinatra. They scarf up the artifacts with their Sinatra MasterCards: eight-track versions of his last solo album, "L.A. Is My Lady," old *TV Guide* covers, expired coupons for his pasta sauces, even video of him testifying at the Nevada Gaming Commission hearings. They celebrate not only his triumphs, but his embarrassments: his disco version of "Night and Day," the remake of "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown," and anything having to do with Frank Sinatra Jr.

They've internalized his vim and exude his style. Like 21-year-old

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Joseph Mizzi, who wears a black suit with an open butterfly collar and keeps all his money in a roll, the bills arranged from high to low, with the presidents facing the same way. Then there's Stanley Palter, the 66-year-old furniture salesman, who forgot to pack his dress pants for the dinner and dance, but who showed up anyway in coat and tie, tassled loafers, gray nylon dress socks—and shorts, because he "wanted to look sharp," like Frank.

You can see it, too, in the karaoke session, where a club singer from Brooklyn who sounded as silken as Johnny Hartman, but who wore the tux of a discount magician, dangled his long ash over the kelly-green carpet, yelling encouragement to the atrophied old dolls and socks'n'sandaled wheezers who suddenly seemed ennobled by "Witchcraft" and "The Best is Yet to Come."

"Take it uptown, baby," Frank Sinatra prodded one of the karaoke boys. No, not *that* Frank Sinatra—another one, who seems to have renamed himself in tribute to the Chairman of the Board. He has a phone card that reads "Frank Sinatra," even. But when somebody asked him to prove it with a driver's license, Sinatra looked insulted. "I don't drive, I'm driven," he deadpanned. (Like Frank, he had an entourage, two guys named Johnny Schiano and Johnny Bread. "They don't call him 'Bread' for nuttin'," Johnny said of Johnny. "That's all I'm gonna say.")

This was not a wake, but a mildly ribald, coarse homage, appropriate to the subject. I had after-dinner drinks with Rick Apt and Nicky Russo, an Atlantic City liquor-store owner with apple-butter coloring and cufflinks the size of hubcaps. My wife doesn't own as much jewelry as he was wearing in one shot: twin pinky rings, four bracelets per wrist, a gold chain that contained a crucifix, a "Boss" charm, an Italian horn, and a gold Sinatra head with blue sapphires for eyes. We watched the DJ clear the dance floor with "Send In the Clowns," and Nicky offered amicable threats: "If you play that Snoop Doggy Dogg, it'll be your last song."

As Rick attempted to get serious, telling me how his dad died when he was young and Sinatra became a father figure, Nicky's Dewar's nearly escaped through his nose. "Yeah," he said, "Frank used to take him down to Little League." And here he slipped into clipped Hobokenese, in imitation of The Man: "Hit the ball, ya fat bastahd."

There were moments when I heard the voices of grown men—strong men, who lift things for a living—crack a little when describing Sinatra's last shows in 1994. Brad Lorrico, a 56-year-old who "loads trucks" and who has seen Sinatra perform live about 110 times, was there when Frank told the same jokes three times and introduced Frank Jr. (his bandleader) four times and couldn't get through a song even with the TelePrompTers he had taken to using in the late 1980s. "I don't think Frank ever cried in public," he said, "but that night, he actually had tears. People in the audience would start cheering and finishing his songs—like, 'Frank, you're there, the rest isn't important. You're there for us—and we're here for you.'"

Slap-happy Sinatra

It is usually at this point in a Sinatra article that scholars will tell you his six-decades staying power is due to his long-breath techniques, his intonation and dynamics, his sustained legato, his vocal color. But it's a little simpler than that, says Harold Klein, a 68-year-old Baltimore builder who sells Sinatra clocks and watches: "He's got the most charisma. He could walk out on the stage and fart, and they would applaud."

Klein, in his white pants and blue denim shirt with epaulets, can relate to Sinatra. He too has a charismatic bent, sometimes to detrimental effect, like when he's insulting our mistake-prone waiter ("He should come with an eraser on his head") or fighting with other perfectly likable vendors ("I wanna tear his eyeballs out" he said of one) or excusing Sinatra's beastly appetites ("He's had more women in bed than Johns Hopkins Hospital").

Almost unanimously thought of as a blowhard and a bully at Sinatrapalooza, Klein brings to mind what Sinatra friend George Schlatter, the producer, once said: "Frank is just like you. Just like me. Only bigger." So I sit enraptured, watching Klein bite the head off a French fry as spittle collects in the corners of his mouth and he perfectly distills what the technocrats and the detractors and the hipster arrivistes often miss about what makes Sinatra Sinatra:

"He projected an air of danger, as if to say, 'Darling, I'm gonna sing to you, or I'm gonna break both your f—in' legs.' But it was beautifully dangerous. And if you lay down one night in the dark, and put on the headphones, and listen to him sing 'Only the Lonely' or 'I'm a Fool To Want You,' you hear a man open up his heart. To be a real singer is to stand bare-a— naked in front of 10,000 people, and to bare your heart, and to touch those people and make them say, 'I remember when I was in love—there's nothin' like it, man.'" ♦

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Parody

July 22, 1997
Dear Colleague,

I know you are concerned about the events of the last two weeks. . . . I've made two mistakes. . . . One, I attended two meetings among Leaders where, based on reports of an uprising, we engaged in "what if" scenarios. . . . When I went before the Conference about the article in *The Hill* last Wednesday, I spoke what I believed to be the truth. I believed that no Member of Leadership was involved. The reaction by Lindsey Graham frankly surprised me, and I began digging to find out why he and others began to call me a liar. . . . I apologize for my initial belief.

Dick Armey
House Majority Leader

Dear Wife,

I know you are concerned about the events of the last two weeks. You have seen several versions of the story in press reports that I and some of my friends from Shipping did cartwheels through the streets, drunk and naked, with lampshades on our heads and prostitutes on our arms. I would like to get this ugly episode behind us and set the record straight.

I've made two mistakes. One, when I asked the bartender to pour me eighteen shots of grain alcohol, I assumed that he'd take "grain alcohol" in its metaphorical sense, to mean "Diet Coke." When I fell down, vandalized the barroom, began to sing "The Wild Irish Rover," and threw up, my reaction frankly surprised me. Knowing what I know now, I realize the situation could have been handled differently.

At that point, I engaged in a "what if" scenario. I said, "Hey, guys! What if we did cartwheels through the streets, drunk and naked, with lampshades on our heads and prostitutes on our arms?" At no time did I think we would actually do it.

But when I said there were no other guys from Shipping involved, I was acting under a sincere misimpression. With their lampshades on and their clothes off, they didn't *look* like the guys from Shipping, so I began digging to find out why the guys from Sales called you and told you I was a liar. I apologize for my initial belief.

Sincerely,
Dick Blarney
Your Husband

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